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Colin MacInnes

Young England, Half-English

The Pied Piper from Bermondsey

WHEN the tabs part, you see the "Steelmen," his band of four musicians, cavorting in a wild, archaic, "rag-time" manner—pianist playing standing, saxophonist on his knees. In the centre, before the mike, is a gold-haired Robin Goodfellow, dressed in sky-blue jeans and a neon-hued shirting, who jumps, skips, doubles up, and wriggles as he sings. At certain ritual gestures—a dig with the foot, a violent mop shake of the head—the teen-agers massed from stalls to gallery utter a collective shriek of ecstasy. Tommy has *sent* them: their idol has given bliss for gold.

To-day, youth has money, and teen-agers have become a power. In their struggle to impose their wills upon the adult world, young men and women have always been blessed with energy, but never, until now, with wealth. After handing a pound or two over to Mum, they are now left with more "spending money" than most of their elders, crushed by adult obligations. They are a social group whose tastes are studied with respect—particularly by the entertainment industry. No teen-ager is without his radiogram and collection of pop discs that have won a current place in the top twenty of the Hit Parade. A sale of a million copies of a pop is not unknown in England (in America, it can be five times as many)—in which event, the recording company presents the performer with a "golden disc" (it is, in fact, gold-plated).

Almost all the best-sellers are recordings made by singers. Until quite recently, the vast majority of pop discs bought by English teen-agers were sung by American singers, and written by American lyric-writers and composers. This meant that English boys and girls identified themselves, imaginatively, with a completely alien world—the world of a double dream. To-day, while most pop successes are still American, the names of British singers are found increasingly in the weekly list of the top twenty; and among them, consistently, that of Tommy Steele.

EARLIER this year, when Tommy was not yet twenty-one, a film about his life appeared, called *The Tommy Steele Story*. This picture, which I believe to be enormously revealing of contemporary English folk ways was, so far as I could check, entirely ignored by serious film critics. It told, with embellishments but accurately enough, the Cinderella story of Tommy's rise, in less than a year, from the total obscurity of the Old Kent Road to the status of a national teen-age idol.

Briefly, his story is this. He was born Tommy Hicks, worked as a merchant seaman, studied the guitar, and then, at the height of the rock-'n'-roll craze, he played and sang as an amateur in coffee bars and jazz clubs. He was "discovered" by an extremely able team of business managers and agents, and within a matter of months he had recorded with Decca, and made TV, Variety, and cabaret appearances, culminating in his memorable conquest of the hallowed cellarage of the Café de Paris. Since then there have

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been the film, a Continental tour, offers for an American musical, a full-scale BBC television tribute, and another film about his life is in the making.

Tommy's detractors attribute this prodigious success to a gimmick ("The English Elvis Presley") and to astute promotion. I cannot agree with this, and think it is the coincidence of a really remarkable talent with a particular state of mind among English teen-agers that explains it.

First, the talent. The most striking feature of Tommy's performance is that it is both animally sensual and innocent, pure. He is Pan, he is Puck, he is every nice young girl's boy, every kid's favourite elder brother, every mother's cherished adolescent son. His charmingly ugly, melancholy, cheeky countenance, and his elfin body with its gesticulations like an electric eel, are irresistibly engaging. Even in the film which, by any serious standards, is a dreadfully bad one, his charm, verve, and abundant *joie de vivre* continually rescue scenes of otherwise total banality.

And what of the kids? I've spoken with some of Tommy's teen-age fans, who send him 2,000 letters a week (150 containing proposals of marriage), and wear autographed "Tommy Steele" garments for both sexes. When they talk of Tommy, a look suffuses their earnest faces that I can only describe as one of rapture. They love him: it's as simple as that; and his fan mail reveals that children and, significally, Mums, adore him too. When I saw his film, I sat next to one such Mum and child, and there was no mistaking the cooing maternal note of joy, or the delighted infant cry of "Tom-mee!" whenever he appeared upon the screen.

BUT I think there may be something more: the fact that Tommy Steele is English; and that many teen-agers have hoped for, and now found, a troubadour with whom they can identify themselves more fully than they ever could with Elvis or with Johnnie Ray.

The pop song of the past decade is an American invention, and its greatest practitioners have undoubtedly been Americans. Although these songs are despised by educated persons (who never hear them) and, even more so, by lovers of serious jazz music (who, with pain, occasionally do), there is no denying that pop songs have a certain artistic quality, which resides, almost exclusively, in the art of the individual singers. The tunes and lyrics in themselves are often of meagre quality—although manufactured with extreme competence—and the emotions they evoke are almost invariably synthetic: that is, they are songs about the idea of life, but rarely about life itself. Yet when projected from the larynx of a compulsive pop singer, they acquire an obsessive power to hold the mind and feelings, even if at the most superficial levels.

Why has the American pop song so dominated the English market—whereas in the countries of Continental Europe, the native ballads have continued to flourish vigorously beside the imported transatlantic pop? Simply, I think, because we speak the same language, more or less, as the Americans. Until some forty years ago, the English song about English life resounded boisterously in the Music Halls. Since then, new American musical idioms, potently diffused by the cinema, radio, the gramophone, and now TV, have swamped our own ditties with the help, above all, of the shared language of the lyrics.

The most admired singers in this style, very naturally, have been Americans; and the recent change has come about because English singers have mastered the American idiom so completely that an artist like Lonnie Donegan, for instance, is as big a success in America as he is here. Even the skiffle singers —a thoroughly English phenomenon—use mostly transatlantic ballads. The battle for a place among the top twenty has been won by British singers at the cost of splitting their personalities and becoming bi-lingual: speaking American at the recording session, and English in the pub round the corner afterwards.

This strange ambivalence is very apparent in Tommy's art. In his film, or when, on the stage, he speaks to his admirers between the songs, his voice takes on the flat, wise, dryly comical tones of purest Bermondsey. When

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he sings, the words (where intelligible) are intoned in the shrill international American-style drone. With this odd duality, his teen-age fans seem quite at ease: they prefer him to be one of them in his unbuttoned moments, but expect him to sing in a near foreign tongue: rather as a congregation might wish the sermon to be delivered in the vernacular, and the plainsong chanted in mysterious Latin.

Now that the singers are finding an English place for themselves on the golden disc, will the English lyric writers and composers try to do so too? In other words, will they begin to write songs in an English idiom, about English life, that the performers can sing as Englishmen not only in body, but in voice as well? Can teen-agers, in short, take songs about *themselves*?

There are signs of this occurring, though as yet but faint. From the skiffle cellars there come rumours of ballads no longer about American jails, gals, and railroads, but about English ones (for we, after all, have these things too). On the pop level, Tommy's very gifted music and lyric team of Lionel Bart and Michael Pratt (and of himself as well) has certainly composed some numbers—*Butterfingers*, for example, or *Cannibal Pot*—that do possess a certain English essence of sentiment and wit. Perhaps one day Tommy will sing songs as English as his speaking accent, or his grin. If this should happen, we will hear once again, for the first time since the decline of the Music Halls, songs that tell of our own world.

I must confess I don't think this very likely, though, since the commercial forces behind the American pop are so tremendous, and the talent of their artists so compelling; and, at all events, it's certain that if English pop songs, as well as singers, do appear, they'll be profoundly influenced by America. It's a question of measure, though: of an influence not becoming, as it has done in the pop world, an eclipse. Song, after all, is the simplest, most instinctive way by which a people expresses its own ideas about itself; and if a people—like the English—sings about another people—the Americans—then this may be a sign that it is ceasing to be a people in any real sense at all. Perhaps this is happening: perhaps it has to. Yet who, ten years ago, could have foreseen the sensational rise of professional jazz artistry in Britain? Or two years ago, the eruption of amateur performers in the skiffle cellars, unglueing their ears from the juke-box, to pick up and play themselves the washboard and guitar? Who, for that matter, could have predicted Tommy Steele? Who knows? Tommy may be the first English pop artist to sing English songs.

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Peter Wiles

A Voyage to Laputa

Yugoslavia: 1957

THE young man sat with me in the office. Like *every* other office it had a picture of the object of the local "personality cult" on the walls. "I can't agree with your use of the word Communist," he said. "You say a Communist country is one dominated by its Communist Party. But in Yugoslavia that is not so; we are teaching the whole people to think socialistically and to govern themselves."

"Who is 'we'?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"You say 'we' are teaching the people to think socialistically. Who is 'we'?"

"The community."

"Well, then, could you say that sentence of yours again, without using the word 'we'?"

"The community is teaching the whole people to think socialistically."

In his classic *Totalitarian Democracy*, J. L. Talmon defines that concept as follows:

"The totalitarian democratic school, on the other hand, is based upon the assumption of a sole and exclusive truth in politics. It may be called political Messianism in the sense that it postulates a pre-ordained, harmonious, and perfect scheme of things, to which men are irresistibly driven, and at which they are bound to arrive. . . .

The problem that arises for totalitarian democracy, and which is one of the main subjects of this study, may be called the paradox of freedom. Is human freedom compatible with an exclusive pattern of social existence, even if this pattern aims at the maximum of social justice and security? The paradox of totalitarian democracy is in its insistence that they are compatible. The purpose it proclaims is never presented as an absolute idea, external and prior to man. It is thought to be immanent in man's reason and will, to constitute the fullest satisfaction of his true interest, and to be the guarantee of his freedom. This is the reason why the extreme forms of popular sovereignty became the essential concomitant of this absolute purpose. From the difficulty of reconciling freedom with the idea of an absolute purpose spring all the particular problems and antinomies of totalitarian democracy. This difficulty could only be resolved by thinking not in terms of men as they are, but as they were meant to be, and would be, given the proper conditions. In so far as they are at variance with the absolute ideal they can be ignored, coerced, or intimidated into conforming, without any real violation of the democratic principle being involved."

There can never have been a country that more perfectly embodied this contradictory concept than Yugoslavia. In Robespierre's France and Lenin's Russia there was altogether too much terror and too little consent. Under Stalin and Mao the absurdity is even more palpable. Yugoslavia is the paradigm of totalitarian democracy: terror is kept to its necessary minimum, genuine unanimity with

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the government afflicts a large part of the population, and consent of a kind is forthcoming from a still larger.

TERROR, of course, there is: people look over their shoulders, conversations suddenly dry up. With party members on the other hand talk runs like this:

"Well, if you're a democracy why is Djilas in prison?" (The right answer is, of course: "We're a totalitarian democracy, so naturally he's in prison." But no totalitarian democrat accepts for a moment that his democracy is other than perfect freedom, so:)

"Djilas isn't at all important: we think he's a very silly man."

"So do I, but is there freedom where people go to prison for being silly?"

"He broke the law."

"What law?"

"Well, he offended against our most cherished convictions."

Actually, they did get Djilas under a law; there is always a suitable law in a Communist country. Nor is the account of this dialogue strictly fair to me either. An honourable man, who has supremely the courage of his changing convictions, Djilas is indeed "silly": his thought, though original, is very untidy and he overlooks obvious consequences of what he says. But the human race would benefit from having more statesmen and thinkers who were as silly as he.

Certainly the "paradox of freedom" was never more beautifully illustrated than by the Djilas controversy. Thus Tito (*Borba*, 18th January, 1954):

"True [Djilas' articles] contain ideas and formulations which come from Kardelj and me, and from other comrades, which we have publicly discussed at meetings. I was the first to speak of the withering away of the Party, of the League [as the Party renamed itself in 1952], but I never said it must happen in six months or one or two years, but that it must be a long-term process. Until the last class enemy is put out of action, until socialist consciousness has gripped the broadest layers of our population, the League of Communists can neither wither away nor be liquidated, for the League of Communists is responsible for translating into action the gains of the Revolution. And what do we mean by 'democracy'? It is for us a means to our main end —Socialism, in which the most democratic political reform is immanently included, for there is no genuine democracy without Socialism, and no Socialism without democracy. But to preach and write about democracy for its own sake, and at that democracy of the Western type, formalistic democracy, means a regression to old forms of society and not progress as Comrade Djilas maintains."

In 1952, then, Djilas took the lead in expounding the theory of having no parties. But if you consider the actual feelings of men—which he didn't—this is more totalitarian than the Soviet idea of having one. If people are freely to be good "socialists" without either state or party to make them so, the preliminary brain-washing will have to be on a scale that would make a Chinese Communist blench. On the other hand, Djilas' later conception of two socialist parties is the nearest that pure socialism and pure democracy can get to each other. After Hungary and Djilas, frightened official opinion is now veering back to the one-party system; indeed, the more the state is decentralised the more necessary is a single, strong party.

But Djilas or no, the atmosphere is very different from that in the Soviet Union. There is no ferment as in Moscow intellectual circles, let alone Poland or Hungary, and Yugoslavia is perhaps the only Communist country in which young Communists are less sceptical than old. What then are the reasons for this comparative stability, mildness, and confidence?

AS IN the 19th so in the 20th century, the strongest political force in the world is nationalism. Communism has identified itself with nationalism here, in diametrical opposition to the satellites where it was and is simply treason; much more, too, than in U.S.S.R. where it goes hand in glove with Russification; more even than in China where the

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Kuomintang has equal claims. The Partisans were the only nation-wide resistance movement (Mihailovic's force was Serbian); indeed it is hardly too much to say that Yugoslav nationalism is a Communist invention. They were also the only partisans untainted by collaboration—though they were very largely responsible for the collaboration of the others by reason of the ferocious class-war they waged along with their war of liberation. The Communists thus embody both national unity and victory, while all opposition is specifically Croat, Serb, Catholic, or what not, and signifies only division. In the personality of Tito they have a great national leader, and Communism was imposed by them, not by the Red Army.

Then there is their astonishing adaptability, to be illustrated in what follows. As Djilas says so very well in *The New Class*: "Yugoslav Communism has been more consistent than other parties in preserving the substance of Communism, yet never renouncing any shape that could be of value to it." They have no feeling of guilt, no skeleton—that they would recognise as such—in their cupboard. Stalinism did not last long enough for that: they can look their subjects in the face. And finally they still know where they are going: a definite Utopia, not hopelessly different from the present formal set-up, lies not so far ahead. How unlike the Soviet party, which calls its Utopia "Full Communism" in order to distinguish it from the present set-up, and places it in the next century, hedged about with all kinds of impossible pre-conditions; or the Polish party, which never speaks of such things and rubs along from day to day.

That the Yugoslav Communists used to be Stalinists shows them to be violent and gullible, not agents of a foreign power. Their imitation* of the Soviet Union was spontaneous; Yugoslavia was a voluntary satellite, driven by its own internal forces. Indeed it showed every sign of ultra-left deviation, collectivising with great rapidity and making industrial plans that Soviet advisers rightly considered absurd. The absence of Soviet agents in police and army was, of course, what made possible the "Declaration of Independence."

This state of independent dependence has been beautifully described by Mr. Wolfgang Leonhard:†

"In a few days it became clear to me that here in the summer of 1947 enthusiasm was stronger and more genuine, young people more unforced, discussion less schematic, the whole life of young people more open than in the Soviet Union. If it took me only a few days to come to this conclusion, what would Soviet Komsomols say after two months? That must be the real reason [why U.S.S.R. was not represented on the youth railway].

In political lectures only four words, which I kept hearing, upset me: 'After the Soviet Union.' At that time when the Yugoslavs spoke of their successes they started with these four words to emphasise that they never thought of comparing themselves with the Soviet Union."

If these indigenous, nationalistic origins gave even Yugoslav Stalinism a certain confidence and popular support, Titoism has more. This is because it is still more nationalistic, and grants a degree of perfectly genuine freedom in almost all non-political matters. Beside the political terror and the ridiculous uniformity on matters of party line there is free disagreement about the products and prices of the enterprises, about wages, the disposal of profit, the tax system, the location of new investment, etc., etc. There is also a great measure of cultural freedom, to which we shall return. No wonder, then, that the régime is stable.

But Yugoslavia's main attraction for the Sovietological tourist is that *lusus naturæ*, its economic system. A little history is required at this point. The break with

* Nor was the imitation 100 per cent., nor every exception to it made on Soviet orders. Thus social services were never confined to trade union members; the other political parties retained no separate existence as elsewhere but were instantly submerged into the "Socialist Alliance"; the youth railway, which young people came to work on from nearly every country in the world *except the Soviet Union*, was unique, etc., etc.

† *Die Revolution Entlässt Ihre Kinder*, p. 465.

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Stalin both enabled the Party to go through an "agonising reappraisal" and set free some of the already existing deviationist tendencies. The reappraisal was most noticeable in economics: once the "ontological argument" for the Stalinist set-up (that "Soviet" and "Socialist" are interchangeable terms) was rejected, the old ultra-left tendencies sprang into new life: futurism, optimism, and a bold, free use of the genuine popular support available.

In agriculture all this could only mean the end of collectivisation (albeit it was pursued with peculiar violence for a year after the schism, while Tito was trying to heal the breach by proving himself a loyal Stalinist). This retreat was clearly a right-wing policy, a capitulation to hostile forces for which no good ideological excuse has been offered to this day. But in industry, building, and transport the reappraisal of Stalinism from a left-wing point of view led to the most interesting experiment of modern times. The reasoning was as follows, my own comments being in square brackets.

Stalinist central planning leads to stagnation, since it makes insoluble difficulties in human relations which hold down productivity. We can only raise productivity by setting free the spontaneous proletarian support we have [but Soviet experience belies this altogether, and the slackening of industrial discipline is a high price to pay for spontaneity]. It says in Marx* the state must wither away, therefore we must abolish the economic ministries and the central command system; the precise point where the Russians have gone wrong is in setting up bureaucratic state capitalism, instead of getting on with the withering away of the state [but it says in Engels† that "withering away" means that "the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things"; i.e., the *economic* ministries don't disappear at all—it's the army and police that must go; the Yugoslavs have turned orthodoxy back to front]. But if the economic state disappears economic sovereignty can only be vested in the periphery, with the workers in the factories: they must hereafter appoint the directors and divide the profits, there is no other possible sovereign. And many passages and actions of Marx, Engels, and Lenin support this [but rather more contradict it]; besides which numerous socialist writers and experimenters outside this main stream support us [however it is at least logically possible to conceive of a "mandarinate" of socialist managers, recruited as in Imperial China by examination, who would manage the decentralised economy without reference to workers' councils. Indeed Western capitalism is moving in this direction; and it is in fact what happens in Yugoslavia itself].

So the workers must elect a council of management which decides everything subject to certain very broad State regulations. And it follows, almost as an afterthought, that if relations between enterprises cannot be planned by the state, they must be freely formed on a free market; there is no other way. Whereupon the technical necessities of the new system bring it about that the incentive to produce ceases to be plan-fulfilment bonuses and becomes ordinary profit. So that in a fit of absence of mind, while its head was stuffed with the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and *Anti-Dühring* and all that, the Yugoslav Communist Party created just that socialist free market, that "competition within glass walls," that Dickinson, Lange, Hall, Meade, and Lerner recommended—and that Hayek and von Mises said was impossible.

OF COURSE there are still great market imperfections. In so small a country many enterprises must be monopolies. Though capital and foreign currency are both allocated on market principles, rates of interest and of exchange differ from industry to industry. The tax structure is thoroughly irrational. But of these this is not the place to speak, nor do they detract from the essence of the matter. Competition is perfectly genuine, prices really do move freely and outputs really do follow them. Neither party nor

* *Critique of the Gotha Programme.*

† *Anti-Dühring*, III/2. Marx unquestionably concurred.

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state have any dark or secret control: the thing is what it seems to be.

Admittedly the socialist free market did arise in a fit of absence of mind; the party was thinking of workers' control and de-bureaucratisation, and simply accepted the free market as a necessary consequence. And the major theoreticians are to this day good Marxists, incapable of understanding the rational allocation of resources and the finer points of the free market game. On all this side of things, practice is miles in advance of theory. No Western economic influence made itself felt at any point: the party simply enacted the necessary consequences of its own conceptions. Indeed there might have been no such clear-cut result had there been a bigger intelligentsia and more theoretical economic understanding. From Plato to Tito a philosopher king works more freely when there are no other philosophers. Now, after it has all crystallised, the universities teach Western economic theories of the price mechanism as orthodox doctrine; and this growth of an informed public opinion doubtless threatens the simplicity of the system.

Touching no central religious emotion, the socialist free market can be objectively studied by the visitor, since his host is prepared to talk about it objectively. Indeed it may turn out that the free market, with its concomitant rationalisation and de-bureaucratisation, has brought greater benefits than the workers' councils of which it was a by-product; and will have the greater influence abroad in the long run.

These latter, however, are the emotionally and ideologically significant element: socialism plus democracy at the point of production —what more could anybody want? No two weeks' visitor could possibly give an adequate report on them, since the party line is that they are "the true embodiment of everything that is excellent." It would take much time and a fluency in the language to get beneath this surface. The only worker who spoke to me about them was entirely cynical; the only manager who spoke to me about them changed the subject when my questions became searching. *A priori* one would say it was unlikely for them to work well, even though confined to economic matters, in an atmosphere of political terror; and impossible if the terror is precisely about one's attitude to workers' councils. According to official Yugoslav sources the Party has grossly interfered with them, at any rate in the past;* and Mrs. Barbara Castle gives good reason for believing this to be still true.† Certainly the innumerable similar experiments conducted elsewhere, under "capitalism" and "Socialism" alike, have mostly failed—indeed in modern large-scale industry have all failed. Truth to tell, workers' control is an intellectuals' and agitators' racket; your genuine worker wants more wages and fewer meetings. In which unclarified condition we must leave this highly important subject.

But the workers' councils are not the only striking social invention. The local government unit (*Komuna*) is also an economic unit, investing not only in houses and municipal services but also in local trade and crafts, even in agriculture and large-scale industry. Ideologically it is almost as much the "owner" of any factory within its boundaries as is the workers' council; and it is supposed to make its investment decisions on simon-pure market principles. The theory is that ordinary people are interested in their own neighbourhood, and complete democracy is the complete *local* control by the people of what goes on in their midst. We may think of Owen, Proudhon, the Paris Commune, Kropotkin, and—may I say so?—the unfortunate Herr Eugen Dühring immortalised in Engels' vulgar and unfair attack (which proved communes were impossible). You will not expect a tourist to say whether the system has brought the spiritual satisfactions it promises, especially in an atmosphere of terror. Indeed the proposal is now to clip the wings of the Komuni, which have not invested wisely. But there it is, the bare bones of something bold, original, and positively noble. Such are the results of letting enlightened despots loose in a land with a small intelligentsia and a large

* Many quotations in Tochitch, *Revue d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 4/1955.

† *New Statesman*, 10th August, 1957.

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security police. Philosophical constructs materialise themselves, to create a sort of Marxcuckooland. Much here is tragic, and not a little is comic, but still Yugoslavia is the social laboratory from which the world has most to learn.

The first of these lessons is quite simply that free market socialism is a technical possibility: it has been tried for five years in a country of seventeen million people, and production of all sorts has increased under it while political terror has diminished. This lesson hits one between the eyes, yet is curiously unacceptable to many and various people. "I absolutely do not believe in the Yugoslav type of Socialism," writes a Western economic colleague who is neither Stalinist nor liberal. Is it that there ain't no sich animal? or is it grossly inefficient? Difficult to say; he will not bend his mind to the subject, and writes of the virtues of centralisation. A very left-wing pupil, and examinees of all political opinions, speak of socialism as if it necessarily meant central planning. But why? I ask, what about Yugoslavia? They shift uneasily in their seats: it isn't a fair question, there isn't *really* a free market in Yugoslavia, it's all a Communist façade for something else, it isn't really socialism, it's a very small country, it's an exception. I describe (before this trip) the foreign exchange system to a group of colleagues: there is no import monopoly and firms bid against each other for foreign currency. "Come, come: you're joking." I can only lamely reply that that is what it says in the documents (the documents are right, incidentally). Finally, and perhaps most astonishing, a Polish economist tells me I don't understand that the one-party system and public ownership are inextricably bound up with central planning: it has always been so, history shows that there has only been that kind of socialism. Yugoslavia? Ah, but there isn't *really* a free market in Yugoslavia.

The right wing, of course, refuse to admit there can be a free market without private ownership: they want to save the latter by making it an essential condition for the free market, which in its turn really is indispensable for the rational allocation of resources and the absence of bureaucracy. And the left have fallen into the trap; they pretend to like arbitrary and bureaucratic allocation so that they can abolish private ownership. If there is private ownership the free market will make some people rich: therefore the free market is a bad thing. The left have kissed their chains for so long that the iron has entered into their souls. Also there is something improbable and humiliating about having to learn from a minor Balkan dictatorship without atom bombs; where the biggest city has half a million people, factory managers play the banjo in the train and the chambermaid brews up lunch for her family in the hotel corridor.

Such then is the Bevan-Stalin-Hayek line, and Marshal Tito has utterly refuted it. If only he had done so before the National Coal Board had been set up on its present ridiculous lines! Other lessons, however, are more doubtful. Has the system increased or diminished the rate of growth? And what was the effect on growth of, respectively, the socialist free market and the workers' councils? How do you control monopoly, inflation, unemployment in such a system? Is there *really* workers' control in Yugoslavia? Very much remains to be learned.

OTHER East Europeans are the most amusing companions to have in Yugoslavia. A highly competent and impressive representative of the régime is explaining things to us, and I sit next to one such. In 1941, we hear, the people rose against the government and rejected the alliance it had concluded with Germany, full knowing that this meant war; my neighbour whispers "he has not mentioned the rôle of King Peter in this affair." The war devastated the country; it lost 1.7 out of sixteen million inhabitants. "That is not much by our standards." The Stalinist system is impossible for any country to live under. "But in 1947 they were more Stalinist than Stalin." The revolt against the system in the satellites is natural, and owes nothing to the Yugoslav examples. "He is right."

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The contrast with Poland is particularly instructive. The Poland referred to is before the banning of *Po Prostu*; it is early yet to say just how big a change that event has brought. Your Gomulkaite is a moderate pure Marxist by intellectual conviction. He believes in central planning, the evils of American capitalism, the historically progressive character of the Russian Revolution, Harold Laski and all that. He has not the slightest desire to terrorise anybody and is willing to suspend ordinary Western democratic forms only in so far as "socialism" and "Polish *raison d'état*" require. Thus Gomulka* has described Western Parliamentarism not as "formalistic" democracy or any such nonsense, but quite plainly as "integral" democracy, adding that Poland cannot afford it. Your Titoist is a Jacobin-cum-Marxist-Leninist with an infinite capacity for self-deception, a totalitarian democrat in a state of hopeless confusion about the meaning of freedom. For it is Jacobinism that is the nigger in the woodpile; mere Marxism—the holding of silly views on a number of subjects—is perfectly tolerable. Nearly all changes in Poland have been towards a Western model of society; Yugoslavia has gone its own way, hankering not at all after the West but making great and bold innovations of its own, as we have seen. A Gomulkaite is a reformed Stalinist who has undergone a moral revulsion, a Titoist is a retired Stalinist who has seen certain practical difficulties.

The one can laugh at himself, the other not. Thus I sent a draft article to a Polish Communist, wherein he was characterised as "formerly the most prominent Stalinist in the field of economics." No, he wrote back: "*One* of the most prominent, please, I don't want to make anybody jealous." And before leaving for Yugoslavia I discussed with a Titoist the names of people on whom I should call. He was most obliging and provided several. Might I mention his name? His face clouded: I had such a misplaced sense of humour, the things I took so frivolously were sacred in Yugoslavia. For instance, had I not been heard to say that Stalinism was a much more logical system? I assured him that when behind the Iron Curtain I never spat in church—but if you cannot laugh at yourself you know you are infallible.

I asked a Pole who had been there whether he thought people meant what they said in Yugoslavia. "How can I tell? They all say the same thing." "Yes, but you were in the same situation once yourself: surely you can smell who means it and who doesn't." "No, you can't tell. But I presume their unanimity means they aren't saying what they think."

From this contrast arise two very different attitudes to the Western visitor. In Poland they say: "How *very* nice to see you after all these years; let me introduce you to a poet, a night-club proprietor, a bishop, a member of the Central Committee (you'll like him); my God, our economy is in an appalling state and getting worse, but at least we can say so; where can I get a copy of the *Universities and Left Review*? did you hear that one about the Hungarian and the Czech?" In Yugoslavia it is: "You are most welcome; you are not a Communist? well, why should you be?—free discussion is essential; let me introduce you to a factory director, a farmer, a trade unionist; no, of course it's a poor country, but look what progress there's been since 1948; well, we don't want to force it on anyone, and certainly it isn't perfect or final, but we reckon it's broadly the most suitable way of running Socialism; can we tell you anything more about it?"

A state with a single party could be a democracy if it were a multi-faction party. But the Yugoslav party brooks no factions, and is as tight as the Soviet. In 1948 it liquidated its Stalinists, in 1954–6 its democrats. The Polish party on the other hand is a tolerant union of many factions: it has liquidated neither its Stalinists nor its democrats. We may well compare the difference between Geneva and England after the Reformation. Here a new Pope in a new Rome, banning and burning, imposing a new but equally all-embracing ideology; there a union of various views in a

* In his speech to the Central Committee, *Trybuna Ludu*, 16th May, 1957. Admittedly he also alleges that very few Western democracies are in fact "integral."

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church that can in consequence never define its creed precisely, and insists only upon the necessity of its own establishment and formal unity. Here simplicity, uniformity, logic; there a confusing mélange of old and new forms, each kept in being by some powerful faction, the emphasis varying from diocese to diocese. Gomulka has indeed given new force to the German quip, *polnische Wirtschaft*; when trade unions, workers' councils, small capitalist enterprise, central planning, the free price mechanism, collective farms, state farms, independent peasants and voluntary peasants' co-operatives all jostle each other. Yugoslavia has de-stalinised its economy, Poland its politics.

YET culturally the two countries are almost equally free. In Yugoslav literature, Socialist Realism is just one of many tendencies. You may write how you please, but not, of course, what you please. Nearly all films are Western, and I saw only two Russian novels in all the bookshops: *Quiet Flows the Don* and *The Brothers Karamazov*—the latter suspect in Moscow. Russia disputes the field of technical books about fifty-fifty with the West, and has a thoroughly deserved lead in small children's books. Foreign Communist newspapers, on the other hand, are much more easily obtainable than others at the kiosks—it's wonderful what a good paper yesterday's (non-Communist) *Corriere di Trieste* can be. Slovene students are absolutely gone on American popular music—far more so than British students. Nor are they pathetically out of date, as in Moscow. Fashion, too: here, of course, the West sweeps the board absolutely. The coiffeurs put cut-outs from old French advertisements in their windows, though God knows they cannot reproduce the styles, and Messrs. Philips' young cardboard ladies do duty for a wide range of non-electrical goods. Seen in clothing shop window: handsome man in overcoat labelled, "Die Elegante Herrenmode, Winter 1941/2."

Newspapers are, of course, a case apart: they directly affect the régime. But is it wise to let in Western fashion, music, and novels? In Poland this is one of the Achievements of Our October, an obvious encroachment of Western democracy, and in U.S.S.R. the interest in these forbidden fruits is a Promising Sign of Fermentation Beneath the Surface. But in Yugoslavia it is neither of these things. "How can you paint your nails in a socialist country?" a young Asian is said to have asked, and the Bright Young Serbian Thing clearly thought it was the joke of the week. In fact, the Party seems to have carried out a master-stroke: by flatly denying to all these things any ideological significance at all it has sterilised them (it looks now as if the Kremlin were grasping the same truth). Rock-'n'-Roll is correctly seen not as something American but as something young. It has no anti-Tito content at all. The overextended forces of ideological purism have retreated from certain indefensible outworks, and keep their citadel the better for it. Nevertheless the "paradox of freedom" with which they wrestle so conscientiously will not for ever be satisfied with peripheral gains. The crisis will come, if not before, when the Party, recognising its Utopia as a mirage, ceases to feel sure that it has a patent on history. At present only the Yugoslav and possibly the Chinese parties are in this happy state of euphoria. Elsewhere, to quote François Bondy,* "One had an intimation of the uneasy conscience of a régime which is no longer sure of itself, and which knows that the opposition no longer speaks in the name of the past but of the future." As a matter of fact, that was about Spain.

* ENCOUNTER, August, 1957.

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Denis Devlin

The Passion of Christ

To Allen Tate

The Fall

From what did man fall?
From the Archangel Michael's irritated wing?
Man is so small,
Without him first the universe did sing,
So fortunate since the Christ endued his caul:
Let us take on the whole
Story in its negligence and passion—
Archangel, we your images that fall,
Dissolve and reassemble, session by session.
You rise and rise, God's wasp, and sting!
We fall and rise, God's instrument, and sing!

The Garden of Eden

Leaving the Garden, our first father stayed
Behind, and wept, and death is still delayed.

The Man of Sorrows

He sought our sorrow out and bought it back
From merchants in the back streets of the heart:
But we, suspended between love and lack,
Will neither sign off nor take part.

The Annunciation

What we have best imagined is the Mother
Who, with the absolute, say Light, brought forth
Self, without intervention of the Other,
The pure, the Virgin birth.

Gabriel, death-borne on shaking, human knees,
Humorously settles down,
Deriding with his infinite, mad eyes
Our market risk, our saints' unknown.

The Nativity

We are told how the Son of Man was born,
Known to His Father, Who never
Recognises birth or death; and how the worn
World's to be His breath forever.

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Christ takes leave of His Mother

He, Who was born of Her that knew not Nature,
Yet with shut fists weeps like Nature's creature;
The black skies resent their shuddering wings,
And what was heavenly weeps, what natural sings.

Christ's Entry into Jerusalem

Open the gates and welcome in the Lord!
His sweet brow and invisible sword.

Now the palms wither, and the arch
Befriends no more the trulls' and porters' march.

Caesar takes the show seriously—
But Christ is serious with a world to free.

Christ expels the Merchants from the Temple

The salesmen of ideas fake their list,
Worse than the trulls and their traffickers!
Again and again He strikes them off the list—
Again and again they claim the place as theirs.

Washing of the Feet

With false and annual humility,
Contracting singular love into its type,
The Pharisees extend their feet, which He
In saintly rage will wash, and even wipe!

The Last Supper

None of us can remember without tears
Nor asking with what faculty we failed:
Was it the purse, or Peter's doubting ears
    Or the rash brethren jailed?

And when Judas wiped his mouth with bread:
What horror was it raised our loyal arm?
The small room was filled with all the dead;
And Christ broke bread and broke the mortal charm.

Outside the window, the world was still,
Absence of principalities and powers:
    The world His will,
He broke bread and said He would be ours.

The Agony in the Garden

Peter and James and John.
Though the fox find shelter and the swollen, famished dog
And in His dispensation sleep the innocent log,
Yet the Lord finds no breast to lean upon.

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Peter and James and John.
Olive branches mime against the moonlight
All natural agitation from sound to sight:
Yet there is not pain enough in Nature for Him to reason on.

Peter and James and John.
It is not angels He wants, nor fallen angels even, but men
To wear down, if only in Time, that unnatural pain;
Not active Peter, nor neutral James, nor passive John.

Christ before the Magistrates

By now the Church and State have had their fling,
The generous flesh is pared to the bone:
Christ and Caesar come to the same thing,
    The scorned and scornful soul, their own.

There will be something more when this is over,
The Lion and the Lamb adopt His voice,
    Beloved submit to lover,
Kneel down, and then stand up and rejoice!

Veronica's Veil

They tend His fierce divinity, shy saviours,
From the calvaries of the dispossessed,
Ragged mothers who give milk to their neighbours
While the husband fails, and the child undressed

Scrabbles at the empty plate, some holy women
Will take their last white linen from the drawer
And saying: "God is ours as He is human."
Wipe the blood from the unbearable scar.

Before Pilate

To flagellate, to crown with thorns, to make
A show of man who would Man create—
Nothing much when Justice is at stake—
The conflict of laws idly becomes Fate.

The scene's complete! the filthy, wine-lit bands
Forgive Barabbas who shed blood,
Pilate, the surgeon, cleans his distant hands,
In sage disgust, praises the Good.

Way of the Cross

At every stage along that station,
Averted eyes, reluctant heart!
Mob hatred, Pharisees' elation—
His knees watery from the start,

One, Simon, in excess of passion,
Trusted his unreflecting hands;
What is this genius of compassion
That comprehends, nor understands!

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At Calvary

Axes shone in the sunlight
Where sound and sight from one source came;
Christ was striking at the roots
Whence grew our birthright and its name,

The reason that was perfect gave
The round, simple, pagan sun:
What was humanity to save
The tears of Christ in the machine?

Lifted on the Cross

There's little certain—but no doubt
Eternity in Time's put out!

There may be lights over the plain,
That's where some acolytes, mad and sane,

Mad for life and sane for death:
Centurion! crown these ribs of wrath!

The Cross

Two thieves—why two? to make three criminals?
How dare the centre judge the left and right
Judging: "You shall be with Me in Paradise"
Judging: "You shall be in Hell for life"

If I were one of those two casual thieves
And spied on our degraded bloody Lord:
How could I know how to pronounce the Word,
The Word that doubts, the Word that believes?

The Good Thief

It is not right for me to talk to You,
To wait on You with ministerial bow,
To pray, or if I lived in higher merit
To love even, or to adore, or care.
Why? the reasons? there are many of them;
    That You are there and are not there.

The huge and foreign universes round me,
The small dishonours in me coat my heart:
Whether the whim of the ignoble beast
Or the Gothic nobility of the choir,
It makes no difference, both high and low,
    Are burned to nothing in Your fire.

My will You will for a fire towards You
Dies without my kindling, or is quenched
In unguided storms from Your high quarters;
My memory in lethargy turns sour
All whence, my understanding, less imperious
    Day by day and hour by hour,

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Loses whole continents where in my childhood
I was Your Viceroy, and approved the Just
And condemned my natural evil thoughts—
Now, what has changed me? Is it the years
You made and gave me, Lord? or am I prone to the evil
The masters dinned into my ears?

Praise and recrimination sit well on us
Whose quality's defined by life and death;
But nothing, neither life or death adorns us
Like adoration of our Lord, the Christ,
No buildings, no culture of roses, no bridges
Like the majesty of Christ.

The Bad Thief

Lord, we You've made it in our power
To destroy the World You saved us in
And not only our bodies with Your souls,
Your soul created for Your praise forever
But all that has been made against Your image
Passes, both now and never,

Beasts that eat their young in innocence,
Men that torture knowing what they do—
Innocent things and conscientious things—
We who destroy the flower and the grass,
The thrush whose song's as powerful as the sea
All this and more has come to pass.

Ascension

It happens through the blond window, the trees
With diverse leaves divide the light, light birds;
Aengus, the God of Love, my shoulders brushed
With birds, you could say lark or thrush or thieves

And not be right yet—or ever right—
For it was God's Son foreign to our moor:
When I looked out the window, all was white,
And what's beloved in the heart was sure,

With such a certainty ascended He,
The Son of Man who deigned Himself to be:
Then when we lifted out of sleep, there was
Life with its dark, and love above the laws.

Transfiguration

All is as if that Face transpired with Light
As if dark were light
As if wrong were right
The torsion and the tension of that Night!

The world opens like a door: Come in!
Body is in the way,
Soul is waste and play,
Oh, come, Unworldly, from the World within!

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THE QUEENDOM OF THE UNITED STATE

ROYAL CELEBRATIONS IN OLDE YORKE

An Englishman's reflections on The American Monarchy

by

Randolph S. Churchill III[1]

Lesser London, 21 October 2000

IT IS with pleasure that I accede to the request of ENCOUNTER to describe my recent visit to the United State. The occasion was pleasant and august: they were celebrating the fortieth anniversary of their Monarchy. The crowned heads and Party Secretaries of Eurasia, Africa, and the two Arctics were gathered in Olde Yorke to do honour to the American Queen: from Truro[2] had come our own King Charles the Third, with a suite in which I had the honour to be included. We left London in the early afternoon; the Royal rocket bore us smoothly across the Atlantic and deposited us in 45 seconds less than the scheduled time of 27 minutes at the stratoport of Olde Yorke.

After the perpetual sunshine of London the chilly Olde Yorke drizzle struck one unpleasantly at first: even the tall Federal Guardsmen, splendidly immobile at the entrance to Wall Street, seemed to shiver in their greatcoats and bullskins.[3] Yet nothing could detract from the gaiety and brilliance of the scene.

Americans used to boast of their triumphs and excuse their mistakes by saying "We are a young country." Now, in A.D. 2000, this is no longer the fashion. Life in the United State moves at such a pace that it is hard to realise that it is only forty years ago to-day that it became an Olde Country. A recent General Knowledge[4] test among teenage children revealed that more than half of them supposed that Queen Marlene was directly descended from King George III; that the United State had always been a monarchy and that the glorious House of Dietrich was closely allied to the House of Windsor.[5]

It seems therefore worthwhile at this important climacteric of American and global affairs to look back over the past and examine

[1] Great-grandson of Sir Winston Churchill and grandson of the late Mr. Randolph Churchill.

[2] Under the short-lived Socialist government of Sir Aneurin Bevan (1965–1966) the fortunes of the Royal Family had for the first time in English history become liable to death duties (these are an archaic equivalent of what modern Americans more sensitively call "farewell tariffs"). In consequence, in the 'eighties, the Royal Family were glad to accept a takeover bid for Buckingham Palace from the Second Viscount Clore, who speedily transformed it into an emporium for footwear. For the last twenty years the Royal Family have found it more prudent and convenient to inhabit a bungalow in Truro, ancient capital of the Duchy of Cornwall, the only part of the royal estates which has not yet been nationalised.

[3] In England we call this type of headgear a "bearskin." When it was adopted by the Brigade of Federal Guards the name was changed; since Queen Marlene's accession the Dow Jones Industrial Index has never stood at less than 5000 and all references to bears are strongly deprecated not only on Wall Street, but throughout the nation.

[4] An American friend tells me: "Knowledge, distinguished World War III veteran, introduced these culture spot-checks while professing pedagogics at Germany's Heidelberg University."

[5] During World War I British monarch King George V changed the name of his family from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor. The Dietrichs, like other great American families, the Eisenhowers, the Roosevelts, and the Schiffs, have consistently refused to anglicise their name.

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what were the key factors in the establishment of what is now universally regarded as the most powerful, if not the most long-established, Queendom in the world. The whole of this mighty constitutional transformation was "sparked," as old-fashioned Americans still say, by the visit to the United States, as they were then called, of the English Queen Elizabeth II in the autumn of 1957. Exceptional publicity waited upon the occasion. An attack had recently been made upon Her Majesty by the second Lord Altrincham, who to show how up-to-date he was, borrowed a now obsolete transatlantic metaphor and said that his Queen's voice gave him "a pain in the neck." Naturally the citizens of the American Republic were agog to hear the Queen speak so that they could judge for themselves whether the criticism was justified. A nation-wide Gallup poll, sponsored by the Little Rock, Ark., College of Osteopathy, showed that 74.2 per cent. of Americans were captivated by the Queen's diction; that 12.3 per cent. agreed with Lord Altrincham; while there was the usual 13.5 per cent. who "didn't know" or had never had "a pain in the neck."

More significant perhaps than the poll was a statement made over C.B.S. Television by Mr. Edward R. Murrow, who, interviewing Lord Altrincham at the time, observed that that nobleman gave him "a pain in the ass" (*sic*).[6]

Lord Altrincham's attack was not the only one. *Time* magazine wittily, succinctly, inaccurately stated: "Retiring funnies-editor Malcolm Muggeridge (now chiefly remembered as model of sculptor Epstein's controversial gargoyle on West Front of Hampstead Garden Suburb's modernist cathedral) timed a similar attack on the Queen to coincide with the Royal visit. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (who had left presidency of mammoth publishing corporation, Macmillan Inc., to head Cabinet at personal request of 5th Marquis of Salisbury) hastened across Atlantic to his sovereign's defence, telling reporters, 'I'll Punch that fellow's face.' "

EVERY quizz-kid is, of course, familiar with the important amendments to the American Constitution which were necessary to establish a Queendom. The 23rd authorised the President, with the concurrence of a joint committee of Congress, to select the future sovereign. The 24th defined the powers, naturally more copious than those of a British sovereign, that the new monarch should exercise. Among the powers vested in the new royal prerogative, sole discretion was reserved to the monarch in the appointment of ambassadors. In consequence, the distinguished industrial magnates who still adorn the foreign embassies of the United State are no longer exposed to embarrassing General Knowledge interrogations by a Senate Committee, a process which was such a distressing feature of the Eisenhower régime.

It was as recently as 1975 that the Re-Founding Fathers, meeting in Philadelphia under the chairmanship of Mr. Adlai Stevenson, logically decided that under a monarchy, which means the rule of one, the United States should cease to be plural. They were singularised by the 25th Amendment to the Constitution. In consequence, this amendment changed the name of the Flag to "Star and Stripe." This gave particular satisfaction in Texas where it is still widely believed that the only star surviving is that of the Lone Star State. By good chance no alteration was needed in the wording of the National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner," which by strange and singular premonition already foretold the destruction of State Rights and the ultimate triumph of the Federal authority. Monarchy, as has been observed, implies the rule of one person. Great stars, not least Miss Dietrich, are usually happiest when they shine alone. Indeed it was quite early in her reign that Queen Marlene was heard to exclaim in the faultless French of which she has long been mistress, "Les Etats sont moi."

At the time when the new Constitution was still in the melting-pot, the idea was

[6] Spelt in English "arse." To-day this word is spelt correctly in the American Federal schools and correctly pronounced with a long "a."

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agitated that an hereditary Earl Marshal should be appointed to preside over Queen Marlene's forthcoming coronation at Fort Knox. A quietus was imposed upon this agitation by the sensible suggestion that since the Chief Justice of the United State, the Hon. Earl Warren, already possessed a title, he and his family in the female line should be indefinitely confirmed in the appointment. As he was the father of three extremely attractive girls the Matriarchy was thus assured of continuance in important new ceremonial functions no less than in those which were merely justiciary. King Charles III was, I know, particularly impressed by the efficiency and impartiality with which the 3rd Countess Warren dispensed justice when he attended a session of the Supreme Court on his recent visit.

Another amendment, the 26th, provided for an hereditary aristocracy to buttress the new monarchy. Mr. John Foster Dulles,[7] long retired from public service and legal practice, busied himself with a study of the English Constitution and he concluded that part of the strength of our monarchy was that it was not the only hereditary institution in the realm. It was on his research that the 26th Amendment was based. Americans in the '70's detested privilege every bit as much as they do to-day and almost as much as Englishmen have always done. Accordingly Mr. Dulles devised a system by which peerages would, even in the first generation, be entirely fortuitous and independent of personal merit. It was decided that they should all stem from those whose Christian or surnames were Duke, Marquis, or Earl. But Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, who epitomised the spirit of American matriarchy, at this stage pointed out that since the monarchy was to descend through the female line the same prescription should apply to the aristocracy; hence the vast proliferation of Duchesses, Marchionesses, and Countesses, who are the glory of the modern United State.[8]

OF COURSE the royal visit of Queen Elizabeth II in October 1957 would not have been sufficient in itself to persuade American citizens to cast away their birthright and become subjects. But under the 22nd Amendment of the Constitution it was impossible for President Eisenhower to run for a third term. When some rock-ribbed members of his Party suggested repealing this amendment to permit of a third term the idea was quickly scouted as impracticable. The decisive argument was founded upon the report of 48 psychiatrists, one drawn from each State in the Union, as it then was. These psychiatrists reported unanimously that if the citizens of the great Republic were to be deprived under the Constitution of the father figure to whom they had so long been accustomed and if a monarchy were to be introduced it would be very much more satisfying to the citizenry to have a Queen rather than a King, a mother figure being more reassuring than a father figure.

At this time only 70 per cent. of the property in the United States was owned by women (compared with 99.92 per cent. to-day). Nonetheless the embryonic U.S. Matriarchy was already aborning and was tough enough to insist that descent should be through the female line and that the heiress-apparent should normally be married to a son

[7] Her Majesty Queen Marlene was graciously pleased to decorate Mr. Dulles with the Order of the Blue Angel (2nd class) for his services. The first class was naturally restricted to women. Early awards to the First Class included Mrs. Arthur Miller, Mrs. Gilbert Miller, Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, Junr., Mrs. William S. Paley, Miss Bankhead, Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, Mrs. "Grandma" Moses, and Mrs. Frances Liberace Casadonte, mother of the eminent pianist. It was widely believed at the time that Miss Gloria Swanson had declined the honour with the remark: "I never feel blue, and I am no longer angelic."

[8] Some of these ladies are able to trace their ancestry even beyond the founding of the Dietrich dynasty; for Queen Marlene has never forgotten the friends of her early youth. She revived many titles which had fallen in abeyance, and so it is that among the most flamboyant of political hostesses in Washington to-day may be discerned the Duchess of Ellington. It is gratifying for visiting journalists to find that the memories of some of their former Press colleagues are still kept green in the capital in the person, for example, of the Marchioness of Child. These latter titles, of course, originated subsequently to the 26th Amendment passed in 1970 and carry a social prestige inferior to that of pre-Dietrich creations. See Emily Post, 8th edition, 1982. Funk and Wagnall, Co.

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of the President, or failing such issue a son of the Vice-President. If by ill chance both President and Vice-President should be without male issue at a time when the Constitution required a consort for the heiress-apparent, lots would be drawn among all U.S. Senators with sons of marriageable age.

The joint committee of Congress which produced the report calling for a Queendom, shortly after the visit to the United States, as they were then called, of Queen Elizabeth II of England, inclined, at the suggestion of Senator Kefauver, who was at that time aspiring to the Vice-Presidential nomination of the Democratic Party,[9] to the idea of offering the throne to Princess Margaret; not only on the grounds of her beauty and charm but because of her partly German origin. Just as the Founding Fathers imitated in many respects what they conceived to be the principles of the English Constitution, so the joint committee of Congress decided that the success of the English Monarchy was partly due to its German origin, and thought that this ought to be taken as a pattern.

Congress ultimately decided to adopt the suggestion put forward by Senator Kennedy; namely, that the throne should instead be offered to Miss Marlene Dietrich, who was not only of German origin but a grandmother to boot. A grandmother figure was exactly what the age demanded. The success of the monarchy established at Fort Knox in 1960 was thus automatically assured in the female line for three generations. And it is only in this year, A.D. 2000, that for the first time a Presidential Election has been affected by the question of which candidate is more likely to produce a suitable consort for her Federal Majesty Marlene's great-granddaughter.

Vice-President Kennedy's unexpected decision to decline re-nomination for the Vice-Presidency at the recent Democratic Convention in Boston, Mass., is responsible for this turn in events. Vice-President Kennedy's sons will now be eligible to marry the sixteen-year-old Princess Marlene, great-granddaughter of the Queen. President Roosevelt's son is only two, and the disparity in age between himself and Princess Marlene makes it unthinkable that he could seriously sue for her hand. No one thinks that there is a possibility of a Republican victory, but the Republicans have never "despaired of the Republic" and have chosen as Presidential candidate Senator Herbert C. Hoover IV. Their candidate for the Vice-Presidency is a hitherto unknown Texan cowhand called Vice H. President who claims, under the 26th Amendment (q.v.) a prescriptive right to this traditionally elective office. The Democrats, of course, reject this interpretation of the amendment: but so obscurely is it worded that both parties have been involved in costly litigation which has now reached the Supreme Court.

As this article goes to press Countess Warren and her colleagues have not yet delivered judgment. But since the Court has long been stuffed by the Roosevelts with Democratic nominees, the Countess is likely to find herself in a minority of one if she should have the audacity to put forward a judgment favourable to the Republicans.

THE departure of Senator Kennedy from the Vice-Presidency will leave an ugly gap in the administration. The six Roosevelts who have occupied the White House since 1960 have only been figureheads. The effective government of the country has for forty years been in the hands of Vice-President Kennedy who sensibly took as his pattern for power the career of Vice-President Nixon.

It is unfortunate that in the United State, no less than in England, the monarchy tends to be dragged into politics. All God-fearing and Queen-loving Americans will resent the fact that the Republican National Convention should have put into its programme a plank calling for the admission of non-*divorcées* to the Royal Federal enclosure in Madison Square Gardens. Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin, a collateral descendant of the Senator of the early 50's who did so much uncon-

[9] He was edged out by Senator Kennedy who sponsored the Dietrich Dynasty and was thus overwhelmingly elected to the Vice-Presidency, which office he has held ever since.

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sciously to make the Monarchy a necessity in the American system, has gone so far as to drag Queen Marlene into the controversy. He has pointed out that the august founder of the Dietrich dynasty has not herself been divorced. In the democratic, Democratic age in which we live it is preposterous and indecent that such matters should be revived and it is a comfort to all those who endorse the American way of life to know that the 5th Lord Altrincham, lineal descendant in the male line of the 2nd Lord Altrincham, who did so much to tone up the British monarchy in mid-century, will soon be going to the United State on a lecture tour at the invitation of the Granddaughters of the American Counter-Revolution.

In 1970 the capital was moved to New York.[10] The name of the city was changed to the more dignified and monarchical-sounding Olde Yorke; and shortly afterwards the Union was reconstituted as an Incorporated State by means of a vast flotation (reputed the largest in the history of the New York Stock Exchange) of Uncommon[11] and Preferred Stock in the Federal Monarchy. The civil rights problem, with which politicians had long failed to cope, was solved in a trice by the distinguished committee of investment bankers who, for a modest commission, handled the flotation. Coloured citizens were only permitted to subscribe for non-voting "A" shares, *on which however a higher dividend was guaranteed.* This statesmanlike stroke had the curious result of starting among the white citizens of the South a movement for racial integration, with the slogan "Whites Demand Vote Ban Too."

The establishment of a Matriarchy in the United State has been particularly fortunate to the Roosevelt dynasty. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt served for a mere four terms and it was partly his appetite for office, combined with his exceptional electoral prowess, that led to the introduction of the 22nd amendment. Despite this hostile piece of legislation, plainly directed at the Roosevelt family, holders of that name have held office continuously at the White House since Queen Marlene's accession. All four Roosevelt sons together with their widowed mother associated themselves with Senator Kennedy's political embracement of Miss Dietrich as the proper candidate for the throne. Having thus early ensconced themselves on the bandwagon they and their descendants have succeeded in making a private preserve of the Dietrich dynasty very much as the Whig Lords in the 18th century in England were able to appropriate the Hanoverian dynasty to themselves. In a sense the family have become Mayors of the Palace and it is not wonderful that the Republican Party should now have become truly Republican. The Roosevelts, it is true, have not yet succeeded in altering the Constitution to make their family a permanency in the White House. But their ascendancy is unlikely to be challenged in our lifetime, least of all by the aged Senator Kennedy who now has been Vice-President for close on half a century.

ONE of the difficulties which Queen Marlene skilfully circumvented in the early years of her reign arose from the natural desire of each of the forty-eight States to provide her with a home. A similar difficulty had confronted the Founding Fathers in their choice of a capital. These wise men thought they had solved the problem by carving the district of Columbia out of the boundary states of Maryland and Virginia. But by 1970 Washington had spread so far in all directions that, shortly before the capital was changed to Olde Yorke, the Governess of North Carolina remarked to the Governess of South Carolina in the gubernatorial castle at Columbia, S.C., "Pass the port, and don't let these damn Yankees come anywhere south of the James River." Queen Marlene was, of course, crowned at Fort Knox, Ky. The Blue Grass State inevitably evoked in the Queen's mind nostalgic memories of the Blue Angel, excerpts from which were freely played dur-

[10] "Let the capital be where the capital lies."
Sir Pierpoint Morgan IV.

[11] The usual designation "Common" could not, it was felt, properly be applied to the equity of the Monarchy.

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ing her coronation.[12] Kentucky has something romantic about it, and there is something solid about Fort Knox. The combination of romance and common sense made an irresistible appeal to the whole populace and amid the general jubilation there were few who were captious enough to find fault with the locale.

A graver problem presented itself over the choice of maids of honour for the ceremony. For matron of honour there could be only one choice. With some difficulty the Duchess of Ellington was lured from Chatsworth, Ill., where she was engaged in building a replica, on quadruple scale, of the Duke of Devonshire's modest home in Derbyshire, England. But the question of the maids threatened to prove far more vexatious. Several T.V. commentators suggested that there should be a beauty competition in each state and that the 48 winners should be attendant upon her Majesty. Queen Marlene with a radical gesture solved the problem for her advisers. She said: "Let there be 48. But let them come from what legend in future years will believe to be my home town, Dietrich, Idaho. And let them be the 48 plainest girls that the mayor can find." In these circumstances, despite the difficulty of mustering 48 girls, even 48 *plain* girls, from Dietrich, Idaho (population 160), the coronation was an immense success. The 48 plain girls, each as plain as an Idaho baked potato, provided admirable foils for the Queen's majestic beauty as they supported the huge train of peacocks' feathers. This, out of patriotic sentiment, the Queen had procured from the boutique of Nieman Marcus in Dallas, Texas, and not from Balenciaga who, after the death of Monsieur Dior, and until her enthronement, had been her preferred couturier. It will be recalled that Queen Marlene was crowned in a Pan-Denominational chapel so that no offence should be given to any of the minority groups of which the United States at that time so largely consisted. The octagonal crown, newly wrought by Messrs. Van Cleef & Arpells on Worth Avenue, Palm Beach, Fla., was placed upon Queen Marlene's head by a representative consortium which included a cardinal, an episcopalian bishop, a rabbi, an Imam, an elder of the First Church of Christ Scientist, an archimandrite, a Calvinist, and the patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.[13]

QUEEN MARLENE was not so successful in choosing a royal residence as she had been in coping with her coronation. She was advised by the State Department, whose Protocol section had recently been moved for security reasons to Whitehall, Montana, that it would be a graceful gesture to make the central focus of her dynasty in a town called Windsor. But here it seemed impossible to give pleasure without giving tenfold offence. The Secretary of the Interior pointed out that townships with the name of Windsor existed in the states of Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia. Some of Queen Marlene's advisers toyed with the idea of establishing a home for her in Windsor, Ontario, whose population far exceeded the populations of all the American Windsors. But this was before Canada had been annexed to the United State and would in any case have irked the subjects of Queen Elizabeth II, not only in Windsor Castle, Berkshire, but in Windsor, Quebec, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and Windsor, Newfoundland. The likely repercussions of such a choice of Royal Federal domicile had already been brought to Queen Marlene's attention by the 1st Baron Beaverbrook in the columns of the *Daily Express*, of which journal she had long been an addict. In the end the Queen sensibly decided to make her home in Bismarck, Mo., a small town where she vainly hoped for some privacy, whose name commemorated an important statesman

[12] This facility was granted by kind and patriotic permission of the copyright owners.

[13] It is curious to note that the founder of this sect (better known as Mormons), Mr. Joseph Smith, Junr., was born in Windsor County, Vermont. This fact afforded another agreeable, if tenuous, link between the British and American Royal Houses.

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of her race, and which was, unlike Washington D.C., "centrally located." Since the founding of her dynasty Queen Marlene has of course acquired many other homes; but the abolition of State Rights in the 25th Amendment has enabled her to live where she likes at different times of the year. Now that she is more than 100 years old she seldom cares to visit her shooting-box at Balmoral, Manitoba, which was presented to her on her coronation by the forward-looking inhabitants of that bleak province. In her middle youth she has found the greatest pleasure in living in her palace at Buckingham, Pennsylvania, a state which she has further enriched by the foundation of a university at Oxford and a casino at Roulette. Her great-granddaughter, who in the normal expectation will one day be Queen Marlene IV, is studying the laws of probability at the former while her younger brother John Jacob Dietrich IV puts his sister's theoretical knowledge to the test at the latter. It would be an un-American activity for any American who is a subject of Queen Marlene to break a bank, except on the Riviera. Loyalty to the Royal Federal Family therefore compels us to conceal the extent to which it has been enriched by the joint activities of Her Federal Highness and her Federal Brother.[14]

The inter-State jealousies which threatened to make Queen Marlene's reign at the outset so difficult were solved by the total abolition of State Rights by the Amendment of 1975. Thenceforward the Queen could live where she liked; though of course the Roosevelts, who succeeded each other in a rhythmical fashion in the Presidency and were to some extent dependent on the popular franchise, were careful to spread their golfing and fishing activities across the United State. Queen Marlene has no need to condescend to anyone. It is now more than 25 years since she last visited Washington and nearly 15 years since she has resided at Fort Knox. Like Queen Victoria and Dame Greta Garbo she has acquired a passion for privacy, but she has never carried this passion to excess. While Dame Greta commutes regularly from the Riviera to her villa rented on one of the smaller Rothschild estates on the moon, Queen Marlene is content to live a quiet life in her private motel at Buckingham, Pa. Despite the urgent clamour of the press and television she only allows herself to be radiodiffused three times a day, and since becoming a centenarian, has restricted her medical bulletins, whatever the state of her health, to no more than one per minute. As Miss Haggerty recently informed the United Press, "Marlene says that in a free enterprise world she don't aim at out-smarting free enterprise. The Pennsylvania rocket road still proclaims the slogan 'EVERY MINUTE UPON THE MINUTE.' There could still be guys and dolls in Congress denouncing the Queen as a Commie if she tried to go better than the Penn." I understand that Miss Haggerty will be made a dame in the New Millennium Honours list.

[14] But see *Fortune*, December, 1999, for some account of these transactions.

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The Hero in Search of a Dramatist

The Plays of John Osborne

IN ONE of his modern parables, *The Woman Who Rode Away*, D. H. Lawrence describes the remote tribe of the Chilchui Indians, who according to local legend still offer human sacrifice to their ancestral god. The chosen victim is splendidly fed, clothed, and housed, treated with infinite solicitude, and in due course becomes, not merely resigned but dedicated to his eventual immolation. It must be just such a deity, one sometimes feels, who holds sway over the English theatre, with its public patiently awaiting a miracle, its grave and dexterous high priests in the person of managements and producers, and its insatiable appetite for a new playwright (the younger the better), whose sacrifice is demanded to prove that the cult of the drama is still alive.

No guess-work is called for to name to-day's candidate for this conspicuous and possibly unenviable rôle. All the same, Mr. John Osborne has arrived on the scene with unusual talents and in an unusual context. It seems likely that the Royal Court Theatre season of 1956, which brought him to fame, marked a change of taste at least as important as the historic Granville-Barker venture of 1904; at any rate it was certainly *Look Back in Anger* which did more than any other play to establish the new climate. Originality is an unmistakable quality and Mr. Osborne has demonstrated it, as most original writers do, by his capacity to seize upon and emphasise the essentials as he sees them, to the exclusion of all else that until then had been taken for granted. The theatre *may* reflect "the age and body of the time," but it is just as capable of becoming the grand repository of the obsolete and unreal in manners and social prejudices; and this is a particularly real danger for the West End stage, whose staple diet, so far as the British dramatist is concerned, has for so long consisted of plays about the behaviour of the upper middle-class in moments of mild crisis, with mildly comic or mildly unhappy consequences. Perhaps this is one of the minor penalties we have to pay for the extraordinary stability of our institutions, for our immunity from the traumatic experiences of modern life—occupation, civil war, revolution, inflation, or even the collapse of the stock-market—which have so obviously left their marks on the drama of France, Germany, Russia, Ireland, or the U.S.A. At any rate the world of Shaftesbury Avenue has continued to thrive largely on what Mr. Nigel Dennis might call the "as-if" basis, as if it existed solely for a public whose investments had lain undisturbed for three generations or whose children are entered for the same house at a public school which their grandparents attended. Something of this kind, one feels, must lie behind the demure, unquestioning assumptions about life, upon which so much of our modern drama contentedly reposes.

Into this conspiracy of ghastly good taste Mr. Osborne has irrupted indignantly and the howl of Jimmy Porter's trumpet, issuing from his dishevelled bed-sitter to rend the tedium of a wet Sunday afternoon, suggests a fitting symbol for his creator's overpowering desire to take the whole system apart. Admirers might claim that there is an edge to his writing, a certain ruthlessness and extravagance of conception which has not been witnessed in English drama since the 17th century; his critics could equally well detect in it an outrageous (for England) abandonment of decorum and a rising note of hysteria, a prolonged rictus worthy of Mr. Francis Bacon, set to words. ('Wrap it up, will you! Stop ringing those bells! There's someone going crazy in here!') Mr. Osborne is extremely skilful in the use of sound, and the metaphor of sound may suggest a clue here. The besetting weakness of our poetry and still more of our drama in the last two decades has been the failure to "connect," to capture, and hold an audience, especially a young

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audience, and whoever succeeded in solving this problem was bound to release a very powerful pent-up response. Mr. Osborne achieved just this, he got through on a new wave-length, a gift, one may add, denied to many playwrights more skilful than himself, but one which he plainly shares with other writers, however dissimilar, of the so-called "movement" of the fifties. That is an exciting moment in any field of literature and in the theatre its impact is probably the strongest of all. To say this is not to stake out any very ambitious claims for the new fiction or drama. Measured against the standards of the past, can we possibly regard them as anything much more momentous than exciting nursery art? But of course what is far more significant than their content is their immediate popularity, which makes a strictly literary judgment seem altogether too narrow for the context, and sets off the critic in search of a psychological or a sociological explanation.

WHAT then are the *données* of the new drama? First, it speaks with the voice of the young, and that in itself is a rare enough theatrical phenomenon to capture the attention. Any attempt to explain it would have to take into account, for example, the emergence of a teen-age and espresso-bar public as a new class in the community, rudely sceptical of official attitudes and ferociously disenchanted with the era of austerity, personal sacrifice, planned welfare, etc.; the growth of a taste for American literature and entertainment *combined* with a crass insularity towards European culture as something essentially upper-class and dilettanteish (this insularity expresses itself most obviously in the choice of social grievances, which would emphatically not be those selected by anyone who had knocked about the world long enough to pick up standards of comparison); the hostility-with-a-difference towards the parental generation, now so frequently depicted as *les croulants* (candidates for the ash-can), to use an expressive gallicism we may need in the language before much longer; and of course the new view of education, as the hundredweight block of granite on his back with which the modern Pilgrim starts his journey through life.

Mr. Osborne joins in a number of the current hunting-cries and adds a few of his own. He reacts violently against the tastes, manners, and traditions of the upper bourgeoisie and he can seldom resist a crack even at a hyphenated name. He despises its comfort, rejects its conventions, and condemns the bourgeois ethos as *phoney* and as *wet*, the two dirtiest words known to fifties' literature. (Those critics who found the horrors of the Porter household unconvincing, on the ground that no educated couple, however poor, would have lived under such conditions, seem to me to have missed the point; the squalor of the ménage was surely intended by the hero, consciously or not, to be a slap in the face for the bourgeois concept of Home, as an ideal demanding time, money, and other forms of sacrifice.)

He is, of course, sharply aware of the current tensions between the classes and each of his plays deals directly or indirectly with the perils of hypergamy, to borrow Mr. Geoffrey Gorer's phrase; on the other hand he is far from being a social crusader and prefers to handle these issues on the personal rather than the political plane. In his own approach to drama the most apparent influence is that of Tennessee Williams. He shares, he tells us, this author's belief that failure is what makes human beings interesting, and he disapproves passionately of what he calls the "Adjustment" school of critics, who attack Mr. Williams' plays on the grounds that their characters are neurotics, people *not like us*. The neurotic, Adler has told us, is like the normal individual, only more so, and the theatre, Mr. Osborne claims, is the art of the more so.

IF ONE takes this argument one step further the conclusion can only be that the theatre has no moral function or effect whatsoever; and that, of course, is the idea which really shocks the Adjustment Critics. For in the new school of drama the distinctions between "right" and "wrong" are overlaid, the dramatist's prime object is to arouse compassion for all and the problem of evil disappears before the problem of suffering.

In Tennessee Williams' case, the material which lies most naturally to hand, the life of decaying Southern families, presents a rare and distinctly artificial situation. He writes of a backward society in the grip of another, far more advanced and ruthless, yet part of the same flesh and blood. Not that much struggle takes place in that grip, let it be added. It is all part of Mr. Williams' approach that his characters are invested with a kind of animal innocence and apparently lack any power of choice or even any moral identity, all of which factors might be supposed to make him an incongruous model for a European dramatist. In the past the causes of tragedy were commonly found in the qualities which make a man formidable, hubris or ambition or self-righteousness; what Mr. Williams offers is a kind of adulterated tragedy, which celebrates weakness or humiliation or self-indulgence and which tends constantly to transfer responsibility and to lower the standards by which men and women are normally judged.

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Not that the tragedy of weakness is particularly new; the change of theme was apparent at least as far back as Ibsen. The element of decadence is all in the writer's standpoint, and to get the measure of it one has only to compare two plays so similar in theme—weakness confronted with intolerable reality—as *The Wild Duck* and *The Glass Menagerie*. This is not to suggest that Mr. Williams' drama lacks power or skill at its chosen level, but simply that it declines so many of the major issues at the very outset.

Still it is not difficult to grasp the strength of its present appeal. Tennessee Williams has created a new type of heroine, introduced several new forms of atrocity into sex warfare, and discovered in the peculiar simplicity of his subject-matter a special licence for saying the unsayable. This, understandably enough, makes a sure hit with the rising generation, and it is not surprising that Mr. Osborne and other campaigners in the attempt to shake up the established order have adopted the verbal outrage as one of the conventions of the new movement. (A study of the second act of *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* does a lot to explain Mr. Osborne's dramatic idiom.) He has, however, succeeded brilliantly in transforming what might have been merely a tiresome mannerism into a dramatic virtue. In this context it is worth remembering what Yeats once wrote about the language of modern drama:

Of all artistic forms that have had a large share of the world's attention, the worst is the play about modern educated people. Except where it is superficial or deliberately argumentative, it fills one's soul with a sense of commonness as with dust. It has one mortal ailment. It cannot become impassioned, that is to say vital, without making someone gushing and sentimental. Educated people do not wear their hearts upon their sleeve and they have no artistic or charming language except light persiflage, and no powerful language at all, and when they are deeply moved they look silently into the fireplace....

Whatever one might say about the language of a Galsworthy or a Barrie, nobody could level *that* charge against Mr. Osborne. In fact his approach gives him a double advantage, though perhaps only a temporary one, since all shock tactics are subject to the law of diminishing returns. For what he has swept away are conventions not only of speech but of behaviour, and the unfamiliarity of the new manners enables him to create a new kind of apprehensive tension in his audience—whatever will that awful young man say next?

THIS new tone of speech is matched by a new dramatic form, in which the author relies far more upon dialogue (or monologue) to reveal and develop character than upon the normal methods of unfolding a plot. Each of his plays to date is really a vehicle for one or another species of the contemporary hero—who is evidently at once the strength and weakness of fifties' literature, because so overwhelmingly the *raison d'être* of the given play or novel. This impression, of course, is greatly strengthened by the aggressive characteristics of the new hero, whose watchword is self-sufficiency, who is suspicious of kindness or tolerance as essentially soppy qualities, and who faces the world in a spirit perfectly epitomised in one of the lyrics from *The Entertainer*—*"We're all out for good old Number One!"* At any rate Mr. Osborne's special talents, his wit, which generally speaking does not spring from a situation but relies on detached comment or verbal fantasy, his gift for pungent soliloquy and for introducing sudden changes of mood, are perfectly adapted to portraying this kind of obsessive and defensive egoism.

Here it seems worth insisting that the George Dillons and Jimmy Porters are genuine creations and that it is an altogether mistaken approach to try to identify them as so many separate projections of their author. Still the reason for this confusion is not far to seek. It is quite simply that the hero so much dominates the proceedings and that his speeches are invested with a vitality and a conviction denied to other characters. He also tends, in the manner of Lucky Jim and others, constantly "to seek escape in the graffiti of his private thoughts," as a critic has well defined it, and this habit has become almost a hallmark of the Osborne idiom. The result is that the hero develops as a walking manifesto, a sandwichman for his own emotions, rather than as a character firmly planted in the dramatic structure. Does the fault here lie in the author's technique, or in the conception of the protagonist himself? The egoist has always been a classic subject for comedy, but the egoist who lacks convictions, who is conscious of a nagging doubt underneath it all as to whether his anger *really amounts to anything*, is a new phenomenon, and perhaps in the end a subject that admits of no solution which is at once honest and dramatically effective.

However that may be, Mr. Osborne has not yet found a satisfactory pattern of action for any of his plays. He comes nearest to it in his first attempt, *Epitaph for George Dillon*, where the hero, an actor-dramatist believing in nothing but his own talent, achieves a measure of the success he longs for, but only by means of work which he knows to be valueless. Here at least,

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in spite of various crudities in conception, one is left with the sense of an action complete in itself, indeed the play even runs to a moral. *Look Back in Anger*, on the other hand, despite its virtues up to Act III, all too plainly lacks a solution, and in the final scene we are offered an undisguised retreat into sentimentality.

THE ENTERTAINER is Mr. Osborne's most ambitious and most uneven play, containing one rôle of dazzling virtuosity—which is, more than ever, the essence of the whole piece. He has tried here to give his ideas a much wider frame of reference and to make the play take effect upon various planes: burlesque, domestic drama, and political satire, the whole encased in a kind of topical allegory. Of these, political satire is certainly the least achieved, since the author feels rather than thinks about politics and the quality of his ideas may be gauged by a passage such as the following (a stage direction):

GRAHAM DODD may well be like him (Bill Rice) in thirty years, provided he is successful. There are plenty of these around—well-dressed, assured, well-educated, their emotional and imaginative capacity so limited it is practically negligible. They have an all-defying inability to associate themselves with anyone in circumstances even slightly dissimilar to their own. No, Graham Dodd doesn't need much description. If you can't recognise him, it's for one reason only.

Lack of imagination only becomes a subject for satire when you meet it in the surtax bracket, in fact. But, significantly, it is this bracket which is assumed to a large extent to provide Mr. Osborne's public: it is not the underprivileged who make up the groundlings of the Royal Court. The political element in the play is surprisingly reminiscent of the now unfashionable political experimental drama of the thirties; indeed a line from *The Ascent of F.6* might serve as the perfect epigraph for *The Entertainer*,

We have dreamed of a threadbare, barnstorming actor
And he was a national symbol . . .

The Rice family, who comprise almost the whole cast, are a vaudeville dynasty and stand, in a sense, for the past, present, and future of the country. Archie Rice, the comedian who despises his job, leaves behind an unforgettable picture of a man withering from the inside. Grandfather Rice is happily rooted in Edwardiana and cannot begin to understand what has hit us all since 1918. The children have deliberately chosen sordid and uncongenial occupations, presumably through distrust of anything which might appeal to a higher motive. Throughout it is implied that the whole family (country) is living by standards which have long ago ceased to carry any conviction for anybody, and here one uncovers a topic which is central to Mr. Osborne's writing—the horror of living in a society where everyone conspires to enact a squalid and frustrated existence, and only the young are capable of changing themselves.

In an introductory note the author tells us:

The music-hall is dying, and, with it, a significant part of England. Some of the heart of England has gone; something that once belonged to everyone, for this was truly a folk art. In writing this play, I have not used some of the techniques of the music-hall in order to exploit an effective trick, but because I believe these can solve some of the eternal problems of time and space that face the dramatist and also it has been relevant to the story and setting. Not only has this technique its own traditions, its own convention and symbol, its own mystique, it cuts right across the restrictions of the so-called naturalistic stage. Its contact is immediate, vital, and direct.

Unfortunately the music-hall techniques are never organised in any effective relation to the other extremely diverse elements in the play. I should not care to insist that these techniques have nothing to contribute to the dramatist's eternal problems of time and space (could there be something a trifle *phoney* about that phrase in the context?), but their most obvious effect here has been to play havoc with the author's prose. The speeches and lyrics written for Archie Rice are, in their way, gems of parody, exact phrasing, minute observation of tone and accent—even though Archie's powers of self-analysis strain one's credulity to the limit—but so much concentrated brilliance serves also to show up the other rôles. The music-hall's contribution to these is an exasperating feed-technique, whereby each speaker repeats himself or picks up a phrase from his cue in the "who-was-that-lady-I-saw-you-with-last-night" convention. More and more characters, it is true, become more and more slewed as the evening wears on—the play must hold an easy record for rounds of gin consumed on stage—but incoherence carried to such lengths soon becomes intolerable, and this after all is the kind of technical problem a writer is expected to solve by artifice, not by tape-recording.

MORE interesting, perhaps, is the relation of the Entertainer himself to Mr. Osborne's other heroes. The three plays combine to give the impression that the actor belongs to a special, almost sacrosanct order in Mr. Osborne's world. For while he is plainly anxious

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to break away from bourgeois conventions, he shows no sign of writing a new *Love on the Dole*. His plays appeal first and foremost to a sophisticated section of the middle-class and make little or no attempt to capture a mass audience. The theatrical profession, however, knows no class and, in a sense, bestrides both worlds. The actor needs, it is true, a "training" but that of course does not corrupt as an "education" does. The actor attracts Mr. Osborne's admiration because, with no advantages or weapons but his personal appeal, he spurns a safe job and risks an all-or-nothing career. "There is no such thing as failure," says George Dillon, "only waiting for success." If you succeed in the theatre your origins won't matter, and equally if you are as third-rate as Archie Rice they won't help you either. It is significant that Archie is represented as having attended a public school; this touch serves to emphasise the horror of his situation.

Still, when every criticism has been made, an ambitious failure by Mr. Osborne remains more interesting than a row of conventional successes. That is why it seems worth taking his shortcomings seriously. The most dangerous of these is a familiar disability of the dramatist who is also an actor; it consists of retreating into a kind of professional mystique and a world of essentially stagey interests and values. There are signs already that Mr. Osborne sets the highest value on a theatrical status and would not care to be lumped with the Flaubert brigade, as he might call it. The profession, of course, like to remind us that Shakespeare and Molière were actors, but this fact seems to have been more of a social necessity than an artistic one. There really is a capital distinction between the writer who learns to give his intellectual and literary gifts full expression in the theatre and the technician—whether in the theatre, films, or television—whose principal gift, a highly developed sense of the medium, is expended on creating theatrically acceptable forms for more or less trivial purposes. The tendency of the theatre is normally to isolate itself and demand to be judged by its own standards, and the man of the theatre, figuratively as well as literally, works on a narrow platform. One is tempted to urge Mr. Osborne to come out from under that shelter and move into the vastly wider arena of human action and interests, which is where every dramatist of consequence has practised his art.

Ian Scott-Kilvert

Varschetz

WHERE he is not, nor ever has been, but
Now holds her and becomes the centre of
All his imagination and his love;
Whether, like wolves, around the forest hut

The winds howl, a grey blur of storm and air,
Or pale blue skies that do not clash with white
Hold silence tautly to the glazed snow's light
Outside the plate-glass windows, she is there.

And this need only touch the heart, it stirs;
The body's pleasure fills that evergreen;
And verse pours out of a heart's arrogance.

For love has freed the intellect and seen
A sky form round about it, clouds and stars:
Strong, natural art, a timelessness of trance.

Robert Conquest

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W. H. Auden

Music in Shakespeare

Its dramatic use in his plays

PROFESSOR Wilson Knight and others have pointed out the important part played in Shakespeare's poetry by images related to music, showing, for instance, how music occupies the place in the cluster of good symbols which is held in the bad cluster by the symbol of the Storm.

His fondness for musical images does not, of course, necessarily indicate that Shakespeare was himself musical—some very good poets have been musically tone deaf. Any poet of the period who used a musical imagery would have attached the same associations to it, for they were part of the current Renaissance theory of the nature of music and its effects.

Anyone at the time, if asked "What is music?" would have given the answer stated by Lorenzo to Jessica in the last scene of *The Merchant of Venice*. Mr. James Hutton in an admirable article in the *English Miscellany* on "Some English Poems in praise of Music" has traced the history of this theory from Pythagoras to Ficino and shown the origin of most of Lorenzo's images. The theory may be summarised thus:

(1) Music is unique among the arts for it is the only art practised in Heaven and by the unfallen creatures. Conversely, one of the most obvious characteristics of Hell is its discordant din.

(2) Human reason is able to infer that this heavenly music exists, because it can recognise mathematical proportions. But the human ear cannot hear it, either since man's Fall or simply because the ear is a bodily organ subject to change and death. What Campanella calls the *molino vivo* of the self drowns out the celestial sounds. In certain exceptional states of ecstasy, however, certain individuals have heard it.

(3) Man-made music, though inferior to the music which cannot be heard, is a good, for in its mortal way it recalls or imitates the Divine order. In consequence, it has great powers. It can tame irrational and savage beasts, it can cure lunatics, it can relieve sorrow. A dislike of music is a sign of a perverse will that defiantly refuses to submit to the general harmony.

(4) Not all music, however, is good. There is a bad kind of music, which corrupts and weakens. "The Devil rides a fiddlestick." Good is commonly associated with old music, bad with new.

Nobody to-day, I imagine, holds such a theory, i.e., nobody now thinks that the æsthetics of music have anything to do with the science of acoustics. What theory of painting, one wonders, would have developed if Pythagoras had owned a spectroscope, and learned that colour relations can also be expressed in mathematical proportions?

Indeed, for us there is something comic about Milton's lines

> *the fair music that all creatures made*
> *To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed*
> *in perfect Diapason.*

with its suggestion that, in the music of Paradise, the only musical interval is the octave.

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But if he has never heard of the theory, there are many things in Shakespeare which the play-goer will miss. For example, the dramatic effect of the recognition scene in *Pericles*.

PERICLES *But what music?*
HELICANUS *My lord, I hear none.*
PERICLES *None! The music of the spheres! List, my Marina!*
LYSIMACHUS *It is not good to cross him; give him way.*
PERICLES *Rarest sounds! Do ye not hear?*
HELICANUS *My Lord, I hear.*
(Act V. Scene 1)

or even such a simple little joke as this from *Othello*:

CLOWN *If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again: but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.*
1st Mus. *We have none such, sir.*
(Act III. Scene 1)

MUSIC is not only an art with its own laws and values; it is also a social fact. Composing, performing, listening to music are things which human beings do under certain circumstances just as they fight and make love. Moreover, in the Elizabethan age, music was regarded as an important social fact. A knowledge of music, an ability to read a madrigal part were expected of an educated person, and the extraordinary output of airs and madrigals between 1588 and 1620 testify to both the quantity and quality of the music-making that must have gone on. When Bottom says "I have a reasonable good ear in music: let's have the tongs and the bones," it is not so much an expression of taste as a revelation of class, like dropping one's aitches; and when Benedict says "Well, a horn for my money when all's done," he is being deliberately *épatant*.

Whether he cared for music itself or not, any dramatist of the period could hardly have failed to notice the part played by music in human life, to observe, for instance, that the kind of music a person likes or dislikes, the kind of way in which he listens to it, the sort of occasion on which he wants to hear or make it, are revealing about his character.

A dramatist of a later age might notice the same facts, but it would be difficult for him to make dramatic use of them, unless he were to write a play specifically about musicians.

But the dramatic conventions of the Elizabethan stage permitted and encouraged the introduction of songs and instrumental music into the spoken drama. Audiences liked to hear them, and the dramatist was expected to provide them. The average play-goer, no doubt, simply wanted a pretty song as part of the entertainment, and did not bother about its dramatic relevance to the play as a whole. But a dramatist who took his art seriously had to say, either "musical numbers in a spoken play are irrelevant episodes and I refuse to put them in just to please the public," or "I must conceive my play in such a manner that musical numbers, vocal or instrumental, can occur in it, not as episodes, but as essential elements in its structure."

If Shakespeare took this second line, it should be possible, on examining the occasions where he makes use of music, to find answers to the following questions:

(1) Why is this piece of music placed just where it is and not somewhere else?
(2) In the case of a song, why are the mood and the words of this song what they are? Why this song instead of another?
(3) Why is it this character who sings and not another? Does the song reveal something about this character which could not be revealed so well in any other way?
(4) What effect does this music have upon those who listen to it? Is it possible to say that, had the music been omitted, the behaviour of the characters or the feelings of the audience would be different from what they are?

II

WHEN we now speak of music as an art, we mean that the elements of tone and rhythm are used to create a structure of sounds which are to be listened to for their

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own sake. If it be asked what such music is "about," I do not think it too controversial to say that it presents a virtual image of our experience of living as temporal, with its double aspect of recurrence and becoming. To "get" such an image, the listener must for the time being banish from his mind all immediate desires and practical concerns and only think what he hears.

But rhythm and tone can also be used to achieve non-musical ends. For example, any form of physical movement, whether in work or play, which involves accurate repetition, is made easier by sounded rhythmical beats, and the psychological effect of singing, whether in unison or in harmony, in a group, is one of reducing the sense of diversity and strengthening the sense of unity, so that on all occasions where such a unity of feeling is desired or desirable, music has an important function.

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds
By unions married do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee, "Thou single wilt prove none."

(Sonnet VIII)

The oddest example of music with an extra-musical purpose is the lullaby. The immediate effect of the rocking rhythm and the melody is to fix the baby's attention upon an ordered pattern, so that it forgets the distractions of arbitrary noises, but its final intention is to make the baby fall asleep, that is to say, to hear nothing at all.

Sounds, instrumental or vocal, which are used for social purposes, may of course have a musical value as well, but this is usually secondary to their function. If one takes, say, a sea-shanty out of its proper context, and listens to it on the gramophone as one might listen to a *lied* by Schubert, one is very soon bored. The beauty of sound which it may have been felt to possess when accompanied by the sensation of muscular movement and visual images of sea and sky cannot survive without them.

The great peculiarity of music as an art is that the sounds which comprise its medium can be produced in two ways, by playing on specially constructed instruments and by using the human vocal chords in a special way. Men use their vocal chords for speech, that is, to communicate with each other, but also, under certain conditions, a man may feel, as we say, "like singing." This impulse has little, if anything, to do with communication or with other people. Under the pressure of a certain mood, a man may feel the need to express that mood to himself, by using his vocal chords in an exceptional way. If he should sing some actual song he has learnt, he chooses it for its general fitness to his mood, not for its unique qualities.

None of the other arts seem suited to this immediate self-expression. A few poets may compose verses in their bath—I have never heard of anyone trying to paint in his bath—but almost everyone, at some time or other, has sung in his bath.

In no other art can one see so clearly a distinction, even a rivalry, between the desire for pattern and the desire for personal utterance, as is disclosed by the difference between instrumental and vocal music. I think I can see an analogous distinction in painting, though it may sound rather far-fetched. To me, vocal music plays the part in music that the human nude plays in painting. In both there is an essential erotic element which is always in danger of being corrupted for sexual ends, but need not be, and without this element of the erotic which the human voice and the nude have contributed, both arts would be a little lifeless.

In music it is from instruments that rhythmical and tonal precision and musical structure are mostly derived, so that, without

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them, the voice would have remained tied to impromptu and personal expression. Singers, unchastened by the orchestral discipline, would soon lose interest in singing and wish only to show off their voices. On the other hand, the music of a dumb race who had invented instruments would be precise but dull, for the players would not know what it means to strive after expression, to make their instruments "sing." The kind of effect they would make is the kind we condemn in a pianist when we say: "he just plays the notes."

Lastly, because we do not have the voluntary control over our ears that we have over our eyes, and because musical sounds do not denote meanings like words or represent objects like lines and colours, it is far harder to know what a person means, harder even for himself to know, when he says: "I like this piece of music," than when he says: "I like this book or this picture." At one extreme, there is the professional musician, who not only thinks clearly and completely what he hears, but also recognises the means by which the composer causes him so to think. This does not mean that he can judge music any better than one without his technical knowledge, who has trained himself to listen and is familiar with music of all kinds. His technical knowledge is an added pleasure, perhaps, but it is not a musical experience. At the other extreme is the student who keeps the radio playing while he studies, because he finds that a background of sound makes it easier for him to concentrate on his work. In his case the music is serving the contradictory function of preventing him from listening to anything, either to itself or to the noises in the street.

Between these two extremes, there is a way of listening which has been well described by Suzanne Langer.

> There is a twilight zone of musical enjoyment when tonal appreciation is woven into day-dreaming. To the entirely uninitiated hearer it may be an aid in finding expressive forms at all, to extemporise an accompanying romance and let the music express feelings accounted for by its scenes. But to the competent it is a pitfall, because it obscures the full vital import of the music, noting only what comes handy for a purpose, and noting only what expresses attitudes and emotions the listener was familiar with before. It bars everything new and really interesting in a world, since what does not fit the *petit roman* is passed over, and what does fit is the dreamer's own. Above all it leads attention, not only to the music, but away from it—via the music to something else that is essentially an indulgence. One may spend a whole evening in this sort of dream and carry nothing away from it, no musical insight, no new feeling, and actually nothing heard.
>
> (*Feeling and Form*. Chap. X)

It is this kind of listening, surely, which is implied by the Duke in *Twelfth Night*, "If music be the food of love, play on," and by Cleopatra, "Give me some music—music, moody food/Of us that trade in love," and which provoked that great music-lover, Bernard Shaw, to the remark, "Music is the brandy of the damned."

III

SHAKESPEARE uses instrumental music for two purposes: on socially appropriate occasions, to represent the voice of this world, of the collective rejoicing as in a dance or mourning as in a dead march; and unexpectedly as an auditory image of a supernatural or magical world. In the second case the music generally carries the stage direction "Solemn."

It may be directly the voice of Heaven, the music of the spheres heard by Pericles, the music under the earth heard by Antony's soldiers, the music which accompanies Queen Katherine's vision, or it may be commanded, either by spirits of the intermediate world like Oberon or Ariel, or by wise men like Prospero and the physicians in *King Lear* and *Pericles*, to exert a magical influence on human beings. When doctors order music, it is, of course, made by human musicians, and to the healthy it may even sound "rough and woeful," but in the ears of the patient, mad Lear or unconscious Thaisa it seems a platonic imitation of the unheard celestial music and has a curative effect.

"Solemn" music is generally played off-stage. It comes, that is, from an invisible

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source which makes it impossible for those on-stage to express a *voluntary* reaction to it. Either they cannot hear it or it has effects upon them which they cannot control. Thus, in Act II, scene I of *The Tempest*, it is an indication of their villainy, the lack of music in their souls, that Antonio and Sebastian are not affected by the sleeping-spell music when Alonso and the others are, an indication which is forthwith confirmed when they use the opportunity so created to plan Alonso's murder.

On some occasions, e.g., in the vision of Posthumus (*Cymbeline*, Act V, Scene 4), Shakespeare has lines spoken against an instrumental musical background. The effect of this is to depersonalise the speaker, for the sound of the music blots out the individual timbre of his voice. What he says to music seems not *his* statement but a message, a statement that has to be made.

Antony and Cleopatra (Act IV, Scene 3) is a good example of the dramatic skill with which Shakespeare places a supernatural musical announcement. In the first scene of the act we have had a glimpse of the cold, calculating Octavius refusing Antony's old-fashioned challenge to personal combat and deciding to give battle next day. To Octavius chivalry is one aspect of a childish lack of self-control and "Poor Antony" is his contemptuous comment on his opponent. Whereupon we are shown Antony talking to his friends in a wrought-up state of self-dramatisation and self-pity:

Give me thy hand,
Thou hast been rightly honest; so hast thou;
Thou—and thou—and thou; you have serv'd me well....
Perchance to-morrow
You'll serve another master. I look on you
As one that takes his leave. Mine honest friends,
I turn you not away; but like a master
Married to your good service, stay till death:
Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,
And the gods yield you for 't.

We already know that Enobarbus, who is present, has decided to desert Antony. Now follows the scene with the common soldiers in which supernatural music announces that

The god Hercules whom Antony lov'd
Now leaves him.

The effect of this is to make us see the human characters, Octavius, Antony, Cleopatra, Enobarbus, as agents of powers greater than they. Their personalities and actions, moral or immoral, carry out the purposes of these powers but cannot change them. Octavius' self-confidence and Antony's sense of doom are justified though they do not know why.

But in the ensuing five scenes it appears as if they were both mistaken, for it is Antony who wins the battle. Neither Octavius nor Antony have heard the music, but we, the audience, have, and our knowledge that Antony must lose in the end gives a pathos to his temporary triumph which would be lacking if the invisible music were cut.

OF THE instances of mundane or carnal instrumental music in the plays, the most interesting are those in which it is, as it were, the wrong kind of magic. Those who like it and call for it use it to strengthen their illusions about themselves.

So Timon uses it when he gives his great banquet. Music stands for the imaginary world Timon is trying to live in, where everybody loves everybody and he stands at the centre as the source of this universal love.

TIMON *Music, make their welcome!*
FIRST LORD *You see, my lord, how ample y'are beloved.*
(*Timon of Athens*. Act I, Scene 2)

One of his guests is the professional sneerer, Apemantus, whose conceit is that he is the only one who sees the world as it really is, as the absolutely unmusical place where nobody loves anybody but himself. "Nay," says Timon to him, "an you begin to rail on society once, I am sworn not to give regard

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to you. Farewell, and come with better music."

But Timon is never to hear music again after this scene.

Neither Timon nor Apemantus have music in their souls, but, while Apemantus is shamelessly proud of this, Timon wants desperately to believe that he has music in his soul, and the discovery that he has not, destroys him.

To Falstaff, music, like sack, is an aid to sustaining the illusion of living in an Eden of childlike innocence where nothing serious can happen. Unlike Timon, who does not love others as much as he likes to think, Falstaff himself really is loving. His chief illusion is that Prince Hal loves him as much as he loves Prince Hal, and that Prince Hal is an innocent child like himself.

Shakespeare reserves the use of a musical background for the scene between Falstaff, Doll, Pointz, and Hal (*Henry IV, Part II,* Act II, Scene 4). While the music lasts, Time will stand still for Falstaff. He will not grow older, he will not have to pay his debts, Prince Hal will remain his dream-son and boon companion. But the music is interrupted by the realities of historical time with the arrival of Peto. Hal feels ashamed.

By heaven, Pointz, I feel me much to blame
So idly to profane the present time. . . .
Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good-night!

Falstaff only feels disappointed:

Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and we must hence, and leave it unpick'd.

In Prince Hal's life this moment is the turning point; from now on he will become the responsible ruler. Falstaff will not change because he is incapable of change but, at this moment, though he is unaware of it, the most important thing in his life, his friendship with Hal, ceases with the words, "Good-night." When they meet again, the first words Falstaff will hear are—"I know thee not, old man."

Since music, the virtual image of time, takes actual time to perform, listening to music can be a waste of time, especially for those, like kings, whose primary concern should be with the unheard music of justice.

Ha! Ha! keep time! How sour sweet music is
When time is broke and no proportion kept!
So is it in the music of men's lives.
And here have I the daintiness of ear
To check time broke in a disordered string;
But, for the concord of my state and time,
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.

(*Richard II.* Act V, Scene 5)

IV

We find two types of song in Shakespeare's plays, the called-for song and the impromptu song.

A called-for song is one which is sung by one character at the request of another who wishes to hear some music and, while it lasts, all action and speech are halted. Nobody is asked to sing unless it is believed that he can sing well and, little as we may know about the music which was actually used in contemporary performances of Shakespeare's plays, we may safely assume from the contemporary songs which we do possess that they must have made demands which only a good voice and a good musician could satisfy.

On the stage, this means that the character so asked ceases to be himself and becomes a performer; the audience are not interested in him, but in the quality of his singing. We are thinking, of course, of songs introduced into a play written in verse or prose which is spoken, not of arias in an opera, where the dramatic medium is itself song, and we forget that the singers are performers as we forget that the actor speaking blank verse is an actor.

An Elizabethan theatrical company, giving plays in which such songs occurred, would therefore have to hire at least one person as a singer rather than as an actor. If they had not been needed to sing, the dramatic action in *Much Ado, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth*

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Night could have got along quite well without Balthazar, Amiens, and the Clown.

Yet, minor character though the singer may be, he has a character which is peculiar to those who practise his mystery, and, when he gets a chance, Shakespeare draws our attention to it. He notices the mock or polite modesty of the singer, certain of his talents.

DON PEDRO *Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.*
BALTHAZAR *O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice*
To slander music any more than once.
DON PEDRO *It is the witness still of excellency*
To put a strange face on his own perfection.
(*Much Ado About Nothing.* Act II, Scene 3)

He marks the annoyance of the professional who must sing for other's pleasure whether he feels like it or not.

JAQUES *More, I prithee, more.*
AMIENS *My voice is ragged: I know I cannot please you.*
JAQUES *I do not desire you to please me: I do desire you to sing . . . will you sing?*
AMIENS *More at your request than to please myself.*
(*As You Like It.* Act II, Scene 5)

And in the scene between Peter and the musicians in *Romeo and Juliet*, he contrasts the lives and motives of ill-paid musicians and their rich patrons. The musicians have been hired by the Capulets to play at Juliet's marriage to Paris. Their lives mean nothing to the Capulets: they are things that make music. The lives of the Capulets mean nothing to the musicians: they are things that pay money. The musicians arrive only to learn that Juliet is believed to be dead and that the wedding is off. Juliet means nothing to them, but her death means a lot: they will not get paid. Whether either the Capulets or the musicians actually like music is left in doubt. Music is something you have to have at weddings: music is something you have to make if that is your job. With a felicitous irony Shakespeare introduces a quotation from Richard Edwardes' poem, *In Commendation of Musick*

PETER *When griping grief the heart doth wound*
And doleful dumps the mind oppress
Then music with her silver sound—
Why "silver sound"? Why "music with her silver sound"?
What say you, Simon Catling?
1ST MUS. *Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.*
PETER *Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?*
2nd MUS. *I say, "silver sound," because musicians sound for silver.*
(*Romeo and Juliet.* Act IV, Scene 5)

The powers the poet attributes to music are exaggerated. It cannot remove the grief of losing a daughter or the pangs of an empty belly.

SINCE action must cease while a called-for song is heard, such a song, if it is not to be an irrelevant interlude, must be placed at a point where the characters have both a motive for wanting one and the leisure to hear it. Consequently we find few called-for songs in the tragedies, where the steady advance of the hero to his doom must not be interrupted, or in the historical plays in which the characters are men of action with no leisure.

Further, it is rare that a character listens to a song for its own sake, since when someone listens to music properly, he forgets himself and others which, on the stage, means that he forgets all about the play. Indeed, I can only think of one case where it seems certain that a character listens to a song as a song should be listened to, instead of as a stimulus to a *petit roman* of his own, and that is in *Henry VIII*, Act III, Scene 1, when Katherine listens to *Orpheus with his lute.* The Queen knows that the King wants to

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divorce her and that pressure will be brought upon her to acquiesce. But she believes that it is her religious duty to refuse, whatever the consequences. For the moment there is nothing she can do but wait. And her circumstances are too serious and painful to allow her to pass the time day-dreaming:

Take thy lute, wench; my soul grows sad with troubles;
Sing and disperse them, if thou canst: leave working.

The words of the song which follows are not about any human feelings, pleasant or unpleasant, which might have some bearing on her situation. The song, like Edwardes' poem, is an *encomium musicæ*. Music cannot, of course, cure grief, as the song claims, but in so far that she is able to attend to it and nothing else, she can forget her situation while the music lasts.

An interesting contrast to this is provided by a scene which at first seems very similar, Act IV, Scene 1 of *Measure for Measure*. Here, too, we have an unhappy woman listening to a song. But Mariana, unlike Katherine, is not trying to forget her unhappiness; she is indulging it. Being the deserted lady has become a rôle. The words of the song, *Take, O take, those lips away*, mirror her situation exactly, and her apology to the Duke when he surprises her, gives her away.

I cry you mercy, sir; and well could wish
You had not found me here so musical:
Let me excuse me, and believe me so—
My mirth it much displeas'd, but pleas'd my woe.

In his reply, the Duke, as is fitting in this, the most puritanical of Shakespeare's plays, states the puritanical case against the heard music of this world:

'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.

Were the Duke to extend this reply, one can be sure that he would speak of the unheard music of Justice.

On two occasions, Shakespeare shows us music being used with conscious evil intent. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus, who has been false to his friend, has forsworn his vows to his girl and is cheating Thurio, serenades Sylvia while his forsaken Julia listens. On his side, there is no question here of self-deception through music. Proteus knows exactly what he is doing. Through music which is itself beautiful and good, he hopes to do evil, to seduce Sylvia.

Proteus is a weak character, not a wicked one. He is ashamed of what he is doing, and just as he knows the difference between good and evil in conduct, he knows the difference between music well and badly played.

HOST *How do you, man? the music likes you not?*
JULIA *You mistake; the musician likes me not.*
HOST *Why, my pretty youth?*
JULIA *He plays false father.*
HOST *How? Out of tune on the strings?*
JULIA *Not so; but yet so false that he grieves my very heart-strings. . . .*
HOST *I perceive you delight not in music.*
JULIA *Not a whit, when it jars so.*
HOST *Hark, what a fine change is in the music!*
JULIA *Ay, that change is the spite.*
HOST *You would have them always play but one thing?*
JULIA *I would always have one play but one thing.*

(*Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Act IV, Scene 2)

The second occasion is in *Cymbeline*, when Cloten serenades Imogen. Cloten is a lost soul without conscience or shame. He is shown, therefore, as someone who does not know one note from another. He has been told that music acts on women as an erotic stimulus, and wishes for the most erotic music that money can buy:

First a very excellent, good, conceited thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it, and then let her consider.

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For, except as an erotic stimulus, music is, for him, worthless:

> *If this penetrate, I will consider your music the better; if it do not, it is a vice in her ears which horse-hairs and calves' guts, nor the voice of the unpaved eunuch to boot, can never amend.*
>
> (*Cymbeline*. Act II, Scene 3)

V

THE called-for songs in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* illustrate Shakespeare's skill in making what might have been beautiful irrelevancies contribute to the dramatic structure.

Much Ado About Nothing.
Act II, Scene 3.
Song. Sigh no more, ladies.
Audience. Don Pedro, Claudio, and Benedict (in hiding).

In the two preceding scenes we have learned of two plots, Don Pedro's plot to make Benedict fall in love with Beatrice, and Don John's plot to make Claudio believe that Hero, his wife-to-be, is unchaste. Since this is a comedy, we, the audience, know that all will come right in the end, that Beatrice and Benedict, Don Pedro and Hero will get happily married.

The two plots of which we have just learned, therefore, arouse two different kinds of suspense. If the plot against Benedict succeeds, we are one step nearer the goal; if the plot against Claudio succeeds, we are one step back.

At this point, between their planning and their execution, action is suspended, and we and the characters are made to listen to a song.

The scene opens with Benedict laughing at the thought of the love-sick Claudio and congratulating himself on being heart-whole, and he expresses their contrasted states in musical imagery.

> *I have known him when there was no music in him, but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. . . . Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies? —Well, a horn for my money when all's done.*

We, of course, know that Benedict is not as heart-whole as he is trying to pretend. Beatrice and Benedict resist each other because, being both proud and intelligent, they do not wish to be helpless slaves of emotion; or, worse, to become what they have often observed in others, the victims of an imaginary passion. Yet whatever he may say against music, Benedict does not go away, but stays and listens.

Claudio, for his part, wishes to hear music because he is in a dreamy, love-sick state, and one can guess that his *petit roman* as he listens will be of himself as the ever-faithful swain, so that he will not notice that the mood and words of the song are in complete contrast to his day-dream. For the song is actually about the irresponsibility of men and the folly of women taking them seriously, and recommends as an antidote good-humour and common sense. If one imagines these sentiments being the expression of a character, the only character they suit is Beatrice.

> *She is never sad but when she sleeps; and not even sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dream'd of happiness and waked herself with laughing. She cannot endure hear tell of a husband. O by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.*

I do not think it too far-fetched to imagine that the song arouses in Benedict's mind an image of Beatrice, the tenderness of which alarms him. The violence of his comment when the song is over is suspicious:

> *I pray God, his bad voice bode no mischief! I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.*

And, of course, there is mischief brewing. Almost immediately he overhears the planned conversation of Claudio and Don Pedro, and it has its intended effect. The song may not

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have compelled his capitulation; but it has certainly softened him up.

Worse mischief comes to Claudio who, two scenes later, shows himself all too willing to believe Don John's slander before he has been shown even false evidence, and declares that, if it should prove true, he will shame Hero in public. Had his love for Hero been all he imagined it to be, he would have laughed in Don John's face and believed Hero's assertion of her innocence, despite apparent evidence to the contrary, as immediately as her sister does. He falls into the trap set for him because as yet he is less a lover than a man in love with love. Hero is as yet more an image in his own mind than a real person, and such images are susceptible to every suggestion.

For Claudio, the song marks the moment when his pleasant illusions about himself as a lover are at their highest. Before he can really listen to music he must be cured of imaginary listening, and the cure lies through the disharmonious experiences of passion and guilt.

As You Like It.
Act II, Scene 5.
Song. Under the Greenwood Tree.
Audience. Jaques.

We have heard of Jaques before, but this is the first time we see him, and now we have been introduced to all the characters. We know that, unknown to each other, the three groups—Adam, Orlando, Rosalind, Celia, Touchstone, and the Duke's court—are about to meet. The stage is set for the inter-personal drama to begin.

Of Jaques we have been told that he is a man who is always in a state of critical negation, at odds with the world, ever prompt to strike a discordant note, a man, in fact, with no music in his soul. Yet, when we actually meet him, we find him listening with pleasure to a merry song. No wonder the Duke is surprised when he hears of it:

If he, compact of jars, grows musical,
We shall have shortly discord in the spheres.

The first two stanzas of the song are in praise of the pastoral life, an echo of the sentiments expressed earlier by the Duke:

Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?

The refrain is a summons, *Come Hither,* which we know is being answered. But the characters are not gathering here because they wish to, but because they are all exiles and refugees. In praising the Simple Life, the Duke is a bit of a humbug, since he was compelled by force to take to it.

Jaques' extemporary verse which he speaks, not sings, satirises the mood of the song.

If it so pass
That any man turn ass,
Leaving his wealth and ease,
A stubborn will to please,
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame:
Here shall he see
Gross fools as he,
An if he will come to me.

At the end of the play, however, Jaques is the only character who chooses to leave his wealth and ease—it is the critic of the pastoral sentiment who remains in the cave. But he does not do this his stubborn will to please, for the hint is given that he will go further and embrace the religious life. In neoplatonic terms he is the most musical of them all for he is the only one whom the carnal music of this world cannot satisfy, because he desires to hear the unheard music of the spheres.

Act II, Scene 7.
Song. Blow, blow, thou winter wind.
Audience. The Court, Orlando, Adam.

Orlando has just show himself willing to risk his life for his faithful servant, Adam. Adam, old as he is, has given up everything to follow his master. Both were expecting hostility, but have met instead with friendly kindness.

The Duke, confronted with someone who has suffered an injustice similar to his own,

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drops his pro-pastoral humbug, and admits that, for him, exile to the forest of Arden is a suffering.

The song to which they now listen is about suffering, but about the one kind of suffering which none of those present has had to endure, ingratitude from a friend. The behaviour of their brothers to the Duke and Orlando has been bad, but it cannot be called ingratitude, since neither Duke Frederick nor Oliver ever feigned friendship with them.

The effect of the song upon them, therefore, is a cheering one. Life may be hard, Injustice may seem to triumph in the world, the future may be dark and uncertain, but personal loyalty and generosity exist and make such evils bearable.

Twelfth Night.

I have always found the atmosphere of *Twelfth Night* a bit whiffy. I get the impression that Shakespeare wrote the play at a time when he was in no mood for comedy, but in a mood of puritanical aversion to all those pleasing illusions which men cherish and by which they lead their lives. The comic convention in which the play is set prevents him from giving direct expression to this mood, but the mood keeps disturbing, even spoiling, the comic feeling. One has a sense, and nowhere more strongly than in the songs, of there being inverted commas around the "fun."

There is a kind of comedy, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* are good examples, which take place in Eden, the place of pure play where suffering is unknown. In Eden, Love means the "Fancy engendered in the eye." The heart has no place there, for it is a world ruled by wish not by will. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* it does not really matter who marries whom in the end, provided that the adventures of the lovers form a beautiful pattern; and Titania's fancy for Bottom is not a serious illusion in contrast to reality, but an episode in a dream.

To introduce will and real feeling into Eden turns it into an ugly place, for its native inhabitants cannot tell the difference between play and earnest, and in the presence of the earnest they appear frivolous in the bad sense. The trouble, to my mind, about *Twelfth Night* is that Viola and Antonio are strangers to the world which all the other characters inhabit. Viola's love for the Duke, and Antonio's love for Sebastian are much too strong and real.

Against their reality, the Duke, who up till the moment of recognition has thought himself in love with Olivia but then drops her like a hot potato and falls in love with Viola on the spot, and Sebastian, who accepts Olivia's proposal of marriage within two minutes of meeting her for the first time, appear contemptible, and it is impossible to believe that either will make a good husband. They give the impression of simply having abandoned one dream for another.

Taken by themselves, the songs in this play are among the most beautiful Shakespeare wrote and, read in an anthology, we hear them as the voice of Eden, as "pure" poetry. But in the contexts in which Shakespeare places them, they sound shocking.

Act II, Scene 3.

Song. O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
Audience. Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

Taken playfully, such lines as

What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet-and-twenty.
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

are charming enough, but suppose one asks: "For what kind of person would these lines be an expression of their true feelings?" True love certainly does not plead its cause by telling the beloved that love is transitory; and no young man, trying to seduce a girl, would mention her age. He takes her youth and his own for granted. Taken seriously, these lines are the voice of elderly lust, afraid of its own death. Shakespeare forces this awareness on our consciousness by making

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the audience to the song a couple of seedy old drunks.

Act II, Scene 4.

Song. Come away, come away, death.
Audience. The Duke, Viola, courtiers.

Again, outside the pastures of Eden, no true lover talks of being slain by a fair, cruel maid, or weeps over his own grave. In real life, such reflections are the day-dreams of self-love, which is never faithful to others.

And again, Shakespeare has so placed the song as to make it seem an expression of the Duke's real character. Beside him sits the disguised Viola, for whom the Duke is not a playful fancy but a serious passion. It would be painful enough for her if the man she loved really loved another, but it is much worse to be made to see that he only loves himself, and it is this insight which at this point Viola has to endure. In the dialogue about the difference between man's love and woman's which follows on the song, Viola is, I think, being anything but playful when she says:

We men say more, swear more; but, indeed,
Our vows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

VI

So much for the called-for song. Let us now consider the impromptu. The impromptu singer stops speaking and breaks into song, not because anyone else has asked him to sing or is listening, but to relieve his feelings in a way that speech cannot do, or to help him in some action. An impromptu song is not art but a form of personal behaviour. It reveals, as the called-for song cannot, something about the singer. On the stage, therefore, it is generally desirable that a character who breaks into impromptu song should not have a good voice. No producer, for example, would seek to engage Madame Callas for the part of Ophelia, because the beauty of her voice would distract the audience's attention from the real dramatic point which is that Ophelia's songs are to the highest degree *not* called-for. We are meant to be horrified both by what she sings and by the fact that she sings at all. The other characters are affected but not in the way that people are affected by music. The King is terrified, Laertes so outraged that he becomes willing to use dirty means to avenge his sister.

Generally, of course, the revelation made by an impromptu song is comic or pathetic rather than shocking. Thus the Gravedigger's song in *Hamlet* is first a work-song, which helps to make the operation of digging go more smoothly, and, secondly, an expression of the *galgenhumor* which suits his particular mystery.

Singing is one of Autolycus' occupations, so he may be allowed a good voice, but *When daffodils begin to peer* is an impromptu song. He sings as he walks, because it makes walking more rhythmical and less tiring, and he sings to keep up his spirits. His is a tough life, with hunger and the gallows never very far away, and he needs all the courage he can muster.

One of the commonest and most deplorable effects of alcohol is its encouragement of the impromptu singer. It is not the least tribute one could pay to Shakespeare when one says that he manages to extract interest from this most trivial and boring of phenomena.

When Silence gets drunk in Shallow's orchard, the maximum pathos is got out of the scene. We know Silence to be an old, timid, sad, poor, nice man, and we cannot believe that, even when he was young, he was ever a gay dog yet, when he is drunk, it is of women, wine, and chivalry that he sings. Further, the drunker he gets, the feebler becomes his memory. The first time he sings, he manages to recall six lines, by the fifth time, he can only remember one:

And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John.

We are shown, not only the effect of alcohol on the imagination of a timid man, but also its affect on the brain of an old one.

Just as the called-for song can be used with conscious ill-intent, so the impromptu

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song can be feigned to counterfeit good fellowship.

The characters assembled on Pompey's galley at Misenum, who sing *Come, thou monarch of the Vine*, are anything but pathetic; they are the lords of the world. The occasion is a feast to celebrate a reconciliation, but not one of them trusts the others an inch, and all would betray each other without scruple if it seemed to their advantage.

Pompey has indeed refused Menas' suggestion to murder his guests, but wishes that Menas had done it without telling him. The fact that Lepidus gets stinking and boasts of his power, reveals his inferiority to the others, and it is pretty clear that the machiavellian Octavius is not quite as tight as he pretends.

Again, when Iago incites Cassio to drink, and starts singing

And let the can clink it

we know him to be cold sober, for one cannot imagine any mood of Iago's which he would express by singing. What he sings is pseudo-impromptu. He pretends to be expressing his mood, to be Cassio's buddy, but a buddy is something we know he could never be to anyone.

VII

ARIEL'S songs in *The Tempest* cannot be classified as either called-for or impromptu, and this is one reason why the part is so hard to cast. A producer casting Balthazar needs a good professional singer; for Stephano, a comedian who can make as raucous and unmusical a noise as possible. Neither is too difficult to find. But for Ariel he needs not only a boy with an unbroken voice, but also one with a voice far above the standard required for the two pages who are to sing *It was a lover and his lass*.

For Ariel is neither a singer, that is to say, a human being whose vocal gifts provide him with a social function, nor a non-musical person who in certain moods feels like singing. Ariel *is* song; when he is truly himself, he sings. The effect when he speaks is similar to that of *recitivo secco* in opera, which we listen to because we have to understand the action, though our real interest in the characters is only aroused when they start to sing. Yet Ariel is not an alien visitor from the world of opera who has wandered into a spoken drama by mistake. He cannot express any human feelings because he has none. The kind of voice he requires is exactly the kind that opera does not want, a voice which is as lacking in the personal and the erotic and as like an instrument as possible.

If Ariel's voice is peculiar, so is the effect that his songs have on others. Ferdinand listens to him in a very different way from that in which the Duke listens to *Come away, come away, death*, or Mariana to *Take, O take those lips away*. The effect on them was not to change them but to confirm the mood they were already in. The effect on Ferdinand of *Come unto these yellow sands* and *Full fathom five*, is more like the effect of instrumental music on Thaisa: direct, positive, magical.

Suppose Ariel, disguised as a musician, had approached Ferdinand as he sat on a bank, "weeping against the king, my father's wrack," and offered to sing for him; Ferdinand would probably have replied—"Go away, this is no time for music"; he might possibly have asked for something beautiful and sad; he certainly would not have asked for *Come unto these yellow sands*.

As it is, the song comes to him as an utter surprise, and its effect is not to feed or please his grief, not to encourage him to sit brooding, but to allay his passion, so that he gets to his feet and follows the music. The song opens his present to expectation at a moment when he is in danger of closing it to all but recollection.

The second song is, formally, a dirge, and, since it refers to his father, seems more relevant to Ferdinand's situation than the first. But it has nothing to do with any emotions which a son might feel at his father's grave. As Ferdinand says: "this is no mortal business." It is a magic spell, the effect of which is, not to lessen his feeling of loss, but to change his attitude towards his grief from one of rebellion—"How could this bereavement happen to me?"—to one of awe and

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reverent acceptance. As long as a man refuses to accept whatever he suffers as given, without pretending he can understand why, the past from which it came into being is an obsession which makes him deny any value to the present. Thanks to the music, Ferdinand is able to accept the past, symbolised by his father, as past, and at once there stands before him his future, Miranda.

The Tempest is full of music of all kinds, yet it is not one of the plays in which, in a symbolic sense, harmony and concord finally triumph over dissonant disorder. The three romantic comedies which precede it, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*, and which deal with similar themes, injustice, plots, separation, all end in a blaze of joy—the wrongers repent, the wronged forgive, the earthly music is a true reflection of the heavenly. *The Tempest* ends much more sourly. The only wrong-doer who expresses genuine repentance is Alonso; and what a world of difference there is between Cymbeline's "Pardon's the word to all," and Prospero's

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault—all of them; and require
My dukedom of thee, which perforce I know
Thou must restore.

Justice has triumphed over injustice, not because it is more harmonious, but because it commands superior force; one might even say because it is louder.

The wedding masque is peculiar and disturbing. Ferdinand and Miranda, who seem as virginal and innocent as any fairy-story lovers, are first treated to a moral lecture on the danger of anticipating their marriage vows, and the theme of the masque itself is a plot by Venus to get them to do so. The masque is not allowed to finish, but is broken off suddenly by Prospero, who mutters of another plot, "that foul conspiracy of the beast Caliban and his confederates against my life." As an entertainment for a wedding couple, the masque can scarcely be said to have been a success.

Prospero is more like the Duke in *Measure for Measure* than any other Shakespearean character. The victory of Justice which he brings about seems rather a duty than a source of joy to himself.

I'll bring you to your ship and so to Naples
Where I have hope to see the nuptials
Of these our dear-beloved solemnis'd
And thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave.

The tone is not that of a man who, putting behind him the vanities of mundane music, would meditate like Queen Katherine "upon that celestial harmony I go to," but rather of one who longs for a place where silence shall be all.

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K. A. Jelenski

A Window onto the Future

The Story of Po Prostu

IN ITS issue of 30th June, 1957, the Polish weekly *Po Prostu* announced that it was suspending publication for the two summer months. The editors claimed that they were reverting to a former custom which "had not been followed during the past two years, owing to the pressure of events." The announcement struck many as odd, perhaps even disingenuous. In any case, on 1st September the 150,000 readers of the paper waited in vain for it to reappear. Towards 10th September, the news went round that two numbers had been completely confiscated by the censorship. For a good six months *Po Prostu* (the title means "Plain Talk") had had to reckon seriously with the censorship; the young editors each week submitted enough material for twenty-four pages to the censorship, in the hope of saving eight; it therefore seemed clear that, on this occasion, the real issue at question was not just a particular report or article, but the very fate of *Po Prostu* itself. On 15th September, Sokorski, who was Minister of Culture in the Stalin era and is now director of the Polish Radio, called a press conference: *Po Prostu* was not to appear for the time being.

On his return from Belgrade, Gomulka made a speech on 21st September to the workers of the Zeran automobile works in which, after having attacked Djilas, he accused *Po Prostu* of "blackening socialism." "*Po Prostu*," declared Gomulka, "must toe the Party line, or not reappear."* There followed several days of negotiations, during which it was announced that *Po Prostu* would appear once more on 1st October. But certain members of the editorial committee considered that it was better to sacrifice the paper altogether rather than to pervert its spirit. On 2nd October, the Central Committee of the Party came to its decision: *Po Prostu* would not reappear. The street riots that followed made headline news in every country of the world. *Po Prostu* died; but not quietly.

As one looks back on the development of *Po Prostu*, one has the feeling that one is learning something about the whole future of post-Stalin society, and not just about one particular episode in Polish politics. The really curious thing is that all the editors of *Po Prostu* started out as fanatical Stalinists. Their careers run so closely parallel that one is tempted to draw a single composite portrait. Coming mostly from working-class origins, brilliant and favoured pupils, the oldest among them joined enthusiastically in the electoral campaign of 1945 in support of the Communist Party. They came under the intellectual influence of *Kuznica* ("The Forge"—the intellectual focus of Polish Marxism between 1945 and 1948), but reproached the older writers grouped around that journal—Kott, Putrament, Zolkiewski—with being "lukewarm," with giving way to liberal inclinations of petty-bourgeois origin. They thought they were choosing the career of the "professional revolutionary," without perceiving that it had become degraded to that of the Soviet-style bureaucrat, the "*aparatchik*." One of them this year confessed his former disillusionment at not having been able to join the ranks of the political police! They gave no sign, at that period, of the Orwellian "double-think," of Milosz's "Ketman" mentality. At the moment when Gomulka was arrested, they probably secretly scrutinised their companions for any sign of "Rightist deviation."

At what point, then, did they begin to be troubled by doubt? It must have been a lengthy, if unconscious, process. For a long time after

* There are grounds for believing that Gomulka's visit to Tito may not have been unconnected with this hardening of official Polish arteries. Just before his departure for Belgrade, Gomulka earnestly appealed to Polish journalists to give complete support to the government's policies. Could it have been a question of not giving offence to Moscow over secondary matters at a moment when a spectacular rapprochement was taking place between two countries representing the theory of "national roads to socialism"? Moreover, does not Tito himself look with uneasiness on a degree of press freedom in Poland that he does not allow in Yugoslavia?

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the death of Stalin, *Po Prostu* still maintained its orthodox position, and until 1955 the paper hardly differed from its counterparts in the other "people's democracies." Once the change came, however, it came with a rush.

IT ALL began with jazz, which seems to have served, in the Stalinist universe, as the most convenient form of protest, the easiest way for young people to express their fundamental disagreement with the reality surrounding them. Putting it at the simplest extreme, one might say that in the 1950s the young "Left-wing" Pole visited the jazz cellar and made a cult of the "blues," just as the young "Right-wing" Pole rushed to go to church, even if he was not a believer. But with all its knowledgeable talk about "hot" and "cool," its enthusiasm for *Porgy and Bess*, from 1955 onwards *Po Prostu* addressed itself to even more serious matters. And here one must at once mention the most astonishing feature of all. While the older Polish intellectuals remained embedded in their conception of pre-war "Western culture," perpetuating Gide's dialogues with Claudel, emulating Maritain's Catholicism and Giraudoux's wit, the young Marxists of *Po Prostu* struck one right from the outset as international and contemporary. A curious osmosis seemed to link them directly with the post-war generation in other countries. Their vision of the world embraced an odd juxtaposition of various countries. The U.S.S.R., while being hated for its Stalinist tyranny and despised for its post-Stalinist conformism, had its part there with the October Revolution of 1917, with Mayakovsky and sexual freedom and constructivism. America came in too, with its successful materialism, with jazz of course, and Steinbeck, science fiction, gangster films, and new methods of sociological research. From France they acquired a tendency to reconcile "open" Marxism with existentialist psychoanalysis. They would have had no difficulty in speaking the same language as the "angry young men" in England. The result of all this was a curious mixture—as if *Po Prostu* looked to *Fortune* for its major sociological enquiries, to the *New Yorker* for its humour, and to *Les Temps Modernes* for its documentary method and manner of philosophical exposition.

As we know, the revolt among Polish writers occurred several months before Khrushchev made his "secret" speech. Nevertheless, a good many writers who had actively participated in the establishment of the Stalin régime staged their rebellion in such a way that they could also use it as an apologia for their past submissiveness. "Evil" had certainly occurred, but that "evil" was the produce of a "tragic historical necessity." ... The young editors of *Po Prostu*, with their deeper and more rigorous Marxist training—which one suspects they gained by clandestine means—were not satisfied by such reasoning. Their line of thought followed a course which recalls that adopted by Djilas subsequently; and although they did not share his scepticism as to the possibility of building a genuinely socialist society, it was they who were the first to invent the term, the "New Class."

Their determination to submit the Stalinist tyranny to a Marxist analysis shows up particularly in the discussion which took place between *Po Prostu* and Kazimierz Brandys. This clever "social realist" writer, a great opportunist, wrote a short story, "The Defence of Granada" (published in French by *Les Temps Modernes*), in which a symbolical Doctor Faul, moved by a vague sense of "historical necessity," reluctantly persecutes a group of genuinely revolutionary actors. In the person of Doctor Faul, Brandys tried to create a new type of "tragic hero": the implacable Stalinist who is nevertheless tormented by pangs of conscience.

"But who is this Doctor Faul?" asked J. J. Lipski in *Po Prostu* of 1st June, 1956. *"Is Doctor Faul an agent of the bourgeoisie? Clearly not! It is on this basis that Brandys builds his attempt to absolve (there is nothing for it but to use religious terms in this context) Doctor Faul. But no one asserts that Doctor Faul wanted to de-nationalise the factories. Who, then, is Doctor Faul? Someone who has erred (sinned)? And against whom is this 'sin' committed—in whose interest? ... The danger from which we seem, fortunately, to have escaped—although Heaven knows how little, theoretically, we were prepared for it—was the danger of seeing a section of our Party and State apparatus set itself up as a new class. Precisely that: a new class! This new class, if it had succeeded in crystallising and establishing itself, would not have been the equivalent of the bourgeoisie—it would not have denationalised the factories and the farms. But it would have succeeded, even while it preserved the formal characteristics of our system, in voiding them of substance. It would have been in a position to dispossess the working class without in the least needing to institute private ownership of the means of production, it would have succeeded in creating privileges for itself and in shutting itself off from the rest of the nation behind a wall of exclusive and isolated institutions. ... It is not easy to unmask the men, the social group, who were pushing in this direction. They employed revolutionary slogans and—what is more—they were hated just as fervently by the bourgeoisie as by the genuine revolutionaries. We were therefore led to think that if we and*

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they had common enemies, we must also have had common aims...."

NOW ONE can see the basic direction taken by *Po Prostu*: it was against the "New Class," it was for a genuine socialism. To that end, it was necessary to develop the methods of Marxist analysis. Naturally, there was no place for Marxist-Leninism as interpreted by Stalin, "who was not a Marxist and did not represent Marxism." The attitude of the young writers of *Po Prostu* was antidogmatic.

"Even while we consider historical materialism, Marxism, to be the most fecund current in the social sciences, we regard that sectarian attitude as nonsense which says that one should scorn all the discoveries—often of major importance—of other schools of thought.... We consider that Marxism should be subjected to the same methods of scientific scrutiny and verification as any other intellectual discipline—one must perpetually check it against the facts, be prepared for revisions and further developments...."

The Marxists of *Po Prostu* thus embarked on a critique of Marxism by comparing it with historical experience. And they were led to reject a great many theses which only yesterday were still Marxist dogmas: the law of the progressive impoverishment of the working class in a capitalist system, the Marxist theory of crises, the theory of the socialist revolution, all the clichés concerning the mechanism of power in countries governed by Communist Parties, etc. But *Po Prostu* did not merely limit itself to a theoretical critique, however perceptive. The basic principle of the paper's activity consisted in maintaining as close a link as possible with reality, in perpetually comparing theories with facts. Hence *Po Prostu's* celebrated series of special surveys, which in a few months raised the paper to the status of a national oracle, and subsequently led it into even more direct action. These included:

ECONOMIC SURVEYS: "Mud and Dollars"—one of the most scandalous exposés to appear in the Communist bloc—was devoted to Poland's foreign trade, showing the incredible wastage that resulted from the employment, for "political" reasons, of shady intermediaries in the Western countries. One has only to think of certain of the sources from which Western Communist Parties have drawn their funds to gauge the riskiness of such an enquiry.

POLITICAL SURVEYS: "Provincial Life" demonstrated the arbitrariness and absurdity of the provincial "Militias." It is a good example of *Po Prostu's* fondness for using ridicule as a weapon. The survey includes, for instance, this passage taken from a police report, on the strength of which a prison sentence was meted out to the defendant: "N——," who [*Po Prostu* faithfully reproduces the untranslatable punctuation and syntax] "...is known as an enemy of People's Poland which he shows by his behaviour full of ironical intentions and when there are ideological lectures he goes to sleep."

CULTURAL SURVEYS: An "Index Librorum Prohibitorum," a catalogue of books withdrawn from circulation by the Stalinists (e.g., John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, the works of the greatest Polish revolutionary writers, etc.). Also an enquiry into the teaching of biology in the Polish universities which was an attack on Lysenko and "Michurinism."

SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEYS: *Po Prostu's* visit to Kcynia, the "model" prison for juvenile delinquents, produced a harrowing document. After ten years of "socialism," the following motto was still displayed in every room: "Learn to obey—so that, to-morrow, you will know how to command!" The boys themselves, brought up in a "socialist" environment, had reacted by tattooing each other with the "anti-social" device of a snake coiled round a dagger and the cry: "Vengeance!" At Kcynia, the torture chamber was known as "the dancing class."

Po Prostu did not hesitate to indulge in practical jokes as well as sociological enquiries. In Cracow (stronghold of the Polish "Right"), it caused to be inserted in one of the local newspapers the following advertisement: "Matrimonial agency representing diplomats, writers, artists, Polish and foreign, receives, Hotel de France...." The ensuing report shows us a procession of bankrupt dowagers and wives of Party officials, all seeking a husband for their daughters in America or Australia.

EACH survey conducted by *Po Prostu* brought in thousands of letters, and provoked embarrassed explanations from the officials concerned. Did the editors of *Po Prostu* foresee that they would be forced into political action? The series "Mud and Dollars" was halted by the censorship, but *Po Prostu* was nevertheless able to announce the setting up of a government commission of enquiry, in which a member of its editorial board took part. The articles on biology led naturally to the convening of a conference of Polish biologists, organised by the editors. *Po Prostu* did not content itself merely with criticising the "socialist realist" theory in the arts, but organised a permanent salon of modern art, in which Polish abstract painters at once showed their strength, with a predilection for tachisme, violent experiment, and a form of post-surrealism similar to that of Matta.

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The Poznan uprising thrust *Po Prostu* right into the centre of the political conflict. It was after coming under fire from *Po Prostu's* editors, in Poznan itself, that Cyrankiewicz modified his judgment on the uprising and inaugurated the new "line" which was to lead logically to the October "turning point." Between July and October, Eligiusz Lasota, the editor-in-chief of *Po Prostu*, became one of the outstanding personalities in Poland. That was the period of close co-operation between intellectuals and workers, an uplifting and genuinely revolutionary phase, to which people in Poland now look back with nostalgia. In the elections of January this year, it was Lasota who, together with Gomulka, obtained the largest percentage of votes.

False assumptions did, indeed, play a large part in that temporary "national unity" which centred on *Po Prostu*. In sharing an anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet viewpoint, Polish Left and Right wings tended momentarily to become confused. Thus Stefan Kisielewski, the well-known columnist of *Tygodnik Powszechny* (the Cardinal's resurrected paper), could praise *Po Prostu* for being, together with the émigré paper, *Kultura* (published in Paris), the best Polish journal. But a chauvinistic and neo-clerical atmosphere was not slow to make itself felt, and against this *Po Prostu* quickly showed a lively reaction. The fact is that Polish reactionaries slipped quite easily into the habits of stupidity and vulgarity, prudishness and chauvinism, that were developed by Stalinism. The internationalism which the Stalinists opposed with conventional and pseudo-patriotic symbols is just as much an object of suspicion to the reactionary chauvinists. Legalised abortion and birth-control, formerly contested in the name of "Marxist anti-Malthusianism," is opposed just as strongly to-day by the Church. Yesterday, it was the Stalinist censorship that forbade all outward manifestations of eroticism, all sexual realism in art and literature—while now it is "Polish fathers and mothers" who protested against an excellent story by Marek Hlasko, published in *Po Prostu*. Before October, it was the Stalinist Natolin group that encouraged anti-Semitism—now it finds a favourable breeding-ground among the petty bourgeois Catholic masses.

THE DECLINE of *Po Prostu* was nevertheless not brought about by the hatred it aroused among the Stalinists, the bureaucrats of the "New Class," nor by the mistrust of traditional Catholic circles. The attacks upon it by Soviet and East German newspapers—to which *Po Prostu* replied at first with surprising vigour —certainly placed the Government in an embarrassing position. But the crucial process was the evolution of that rather vague idea known in the West as "Gomulkaism." Before October, and up to the January elections, it was possible to identify "Gomulkaism" with *Po Prostu*. In the long run, however, it became apparent that a government, a Party apparatus, which stood for a particular phase in the evolution of post-Stalinist society, could not base itself upon a Left-wing revolutionary movement. It was a group of ex-Stalinist intellectuals—some of whom, like Putrament and Zolkiewski, had come from *The Forge*—who took it upon themselves to formulate the "official ideology" of "Gomulkaism" in the weekly *Polityka*, a paper which, while continuing to attack the Stalinists, claims to embody the "positive" aspects of the new Polish régime, and reproaches the "revisionists" with their "negative" attitude. It was only natural that *Po Prostu* should come into violent conflict with *Polityka*.

One may say that *Polityka* also corresponds to a "natural" evolution in post-Stalinist society, a pragmatic evolution in which the principal protagonists are the technocrats and the opportunists. There is nothing surprising in the fact that this group of intellectuals should find a common ground with, on the one hand, the bureaucrats who want to perpetuate the régime without troubling about its ideological content, and on the other with the reactionary lower middle classes who are just as little concerned with ideological programmes the moment that something like a free market reappears and one can carry on with "business" as before. It is in this way that "Gomulkaism" was able to come to terms with both the Stalinist and the Right-wing brands of reaction. The one thing it found irreconcilably hostile was an authentic Left, represented by *Po Prostu*, and the young "revisionists," who were seeking, even though in often contradictory ways, to find the path towards a genuine and humanistic socialism. This "Left Wing" represented the other current—the ideological one—in the evolution of post-Stalinist society, embodying the confused aspirations of the young rather than the "practical" intentions of the "New Class." These aspirations have now been frustrated. But they continue to exist, and sooner or later they shall have their day. One can suppress a newspaper, but one cannot annul a generation.

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Some Japanese Observations

I. Stephen Spender

FROM the moment you step off the aeroplane at Tokyo, they keep asking —"What do you think of us?" When they asked a famous American novelist this, he shook his stick at the batteries of cameramen, and all the newspapers reported that he arrived in Japan drunk. This incident puts us already in command of several impressions: that the Japanese are, like the Americans, the kind of people who want to know what you think of them; that there are plenty of journalists and photographers; that their interest in facts is wide and detached: though it would be inhibited by politeness if they had the sense that being drunk or sober was the novelist's own affair. One of the many ideas I was told did not exist in the Japanese language was "privacy"; another was the sense of guilt.

What distinguishes the Japanese interest in views about themselves from the American kind, is that they do not want to hear just what they want to hear. They are suspicious of replies that seem designed to please, and are quite pleased, it seems, with insults, perhaps because being polite in Japan is bringing coals to Newcastle. Anyway, after the performance of the Noh play *Funa-Benkei*, we were all promptly asked what we thought of it. When I tried to say that the scene of a boatman shouting at a storm, played by the chorus, was perhaps the most beautifully evocative I have ever seen, my interviewer said, in a disappointed voice—"But weren't you very bored?"

Being young, he may have said this partly because he was bored himself with the ancient Japanese drama. Nothing is more striking in Japan than the difference between younger and older generations. The young are as systematically bored with Noh plays, Kabuki, and puppet performances, as the angry young men here with the royal family. A movie we saw in Osaka, made after a best-selling novel, showed how young people with Bohemian inclinations, would like to see themselves. Had the movie been made with European actors, one would have taken the setting to be Paris or Berlin in the 1930's. The heroine, in slacks, with horsetail hair, lounged about, breaking up the hero's (he was an interesting-looking architect) marriage, because she discovered him to be "cocu" (the word was said in French). Apart from eating their food with chopsticks, all the characters lived in the Western style. The books, whose leaves the arty heroine occasionally turned over, were all German or French. The gloom and the mood of impending suicide seemed far more European than Japanese—though doubtless the meeting-place of young Japan with the Europe of the 1920's and 1930's is the mood of the young of the Weimar Republic.

What the foreigner may take to be Japanese are just those *moeurs* which the young Japanese are in process of discarding. He might well find out more of young Japan's ideals on the Left Bank than in the Ginza or among the Geishas.

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THERE are, I suppose, three levels of Japanese urban life. First level, what might be called, I suppose, the real old Japan: paper houses; beautiful gardens; raw fish; sitting on the floor and sleeping on mats; flower arrangements; tea ceremony; Noh plays; Geishas; etc. All this survives, though good Japanese food and Geishas are prohibitively dear expense-account items, and elaborately-dressed traditional drama went the way of kimonos when the Japanese donned their Western-style clothes.

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The next level is the young Japanese: existentialists, dressed in Western style, living in rooms with Western furniture, painting in a manner imitative of New York, Paris, or Berlin. The visitor looks to them for "tradition" while they are looking to him for news of the espresso bar.

All the same, as the experts point out, Japan has spent an unconscionably long time spectacularly and at great speed Westernising itself, astonishing every visitor with its European and American imitations—and yet remaining stubbornly Japanese. This is what makes it fascinating to the visitor. Tokyo is like one of those photographs used for advertising, which looked at from one angle produce a sombre image, from the opposite angle a smiling one. One aspect is a New York which takes its style entirely from Third Avenue—the other the Japan of streets lit by electric magic lanterns, and a style of life in which pleasure is the objective, æsthetic, and fundamentally tragic, universal preoccupation. The glittering half, by the way, lights up in Tokyo at dusk—filling in all the pieces of the jig-saw between the patterns formed by main thoroughfares—and then switches off abruptly at 11 p.m.

This brings me to the third level—the one that really matters—the temperamentally Japanese. Alberto Moravia threw out a remark which perhaps illuminates why the contradiction of everything Western remains so evident against its assertive opposite: "The Japanese believe in Westernisation, industrialisation, power, a standard of living, etc., but they don't believe in progress." And this makes nonsense of their modernism. This may well be truer than a Japanese scientist or cotton manufacturer in Osaka might realise. Some Japanese may think they believe in progress, just as some Westerners may think that they don't.

The third level is, however, taste, politeness, sadness, and rules of conduct so rigid and so unexpressed that they create that surface which makes the foreigner feel he will never know the Japanese. It is this which is oriental and which gives weight to a remark Prince Kukrit Pramoj made to us in Bangkok. "When I am with my Japanese friends, I know we are all Asians. There is nothing Western about us except our dress." Of course, the Japanese experts do know a lot. Yet one suspects from the way they revile Lafcadio Hearn and earlier experts, that they are unaware that the things one knows may turn out to be traps involving one in an understanding of particulars (Buddhism, flower arrangements, the cotton industry) which may prevent one grasping the whole.

THERE is certainly a sense in which all Asians seem children to us who have encountered, through everything that is meant by the modern world, a kind of second loss of innocence. The Fall that preoccupies the poets of the West, happened in about 1760. Two aspects of that loss of innocence are having available statistics and a concept of a standard of living. These mean that Western man sees through himself in new ways—as a statistical unit and as social man, contributing to and receiving his due from the community.

In most of Asia, people in their social capacities remain vague and opaque in sociological unawareness of themselves. The fact that Japan is a country where everything is known, and where there is a standard of living, is what makes it so strikingly different from other Asian countries, and what brings it so close to our original industrial sin. Everyone has shoes, clean clothes, and a clean face. There are almost no illiterates, and the whole population seems to have a passion for education. The Japanese are great readers: the best known literary magazine has a circulation of 600,000.

So the Japanese have attained a degree of self-awareness of themselves as themselves, with their standards, their aspirations, their needs, and their conditions which is unknown among the other populous, lost-in-the-daily-conditions-of-their-lives Asian peoples. But they are as insulated in their achievements and aspirations as they are geographically. And this gives their materialism a solitary, shut-off quality, a kind of desperation, which goes far to explain their recent politics, and

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which, more sympathetically, coincides with their personal attitudes. In their ambitions they are confronted by gulfs. Enormous numbers of students receive university education, with no prospect of getting jobs which suit the level of attainment they may have reached. Wages are miserably low, especially those of intellectuals. And post-war Japan is a place of undirected good intentions, idealism, pacificism, and a leaderless wish to go in any direction the opposite of that pursued by the military in the 1930's. On the face of it, the atmosphere is strikingly like that of the Germany of the Weimar Republic. But Japan is Asia, and one need not suppose that the parallel with Europe will lead to parallel results.

In a very short visit, all one can expect is to make a few guesses based on nothing more solid than intuitions sniffed from the air. One thing I absolutely failed to discern was the faintest whiff of religion. I have never had the impression of shrines so deserted as the Buddhist temples of Japan. True, that in Kyoto, Angus Wilson and I spent the evening in the beautiful gardens of a temple—flood-lit for the occasion—moon-watching with its very distinguished priest. He explained to us that during the war he had been barely disqualified from being a suicide pilot, through colour blindness: he had seen all his comrades go to their deaths, and had decided that he hated wars and armies above everything. Therefore he had become a priest, and he asked us seriously whether we thought this a wise decision, or considered him some kind of an escapist. He seemed to exemplify much more a resigned Way of Life than a spiritual belief.

Services in Hindu temples in India are, to me, often mechanical, slipshod, unctuous, and even odious. And yet Indian temple ceremonies drip with omnipresent spirituality, whereas the equally mechanical and carefree service I attended in a Japanese temple seemed dessicated and drained of all faith. The occasional *croyant*-seeming monks one saw around looked survivals in the manner of flowers pressed between the leaves of an ancient tome. After we left Japan, in Bangkok, the Buddhas seemed scintillating with the reflected credulousness of saffron-robed monkish acolytes.

My failure to find religion in Japan may sound like adverse criticism. It is not. I simply note it as a fact probably more significant of me than of them. In any case, after the prevalent spirituality of India I found all this materialism something of a relief.

Possibly the English are immediately drawn to Japan because they can enter more easily than they may realise into an "island story." The situation of Japan is easily dramatised, like our own export-import balance-of-power drama. Here is an overpopulated island full of well-washed poetic inhabitants with a stoic philosophy (not excluding much self-pity) and a dubious code of honour, seized by laudable aspirations which they sometimes attempt to carry out in unlaudable ways. In spite of their striking differences, we probably identify ourselves with them in a good many not-so-conscious ways.

Stephen Spender

II. Angus Wilson

I, too, was told that the Japanese do not understand the concepts of "privacy" or of "guilt." My informants were not the same as those of S.S. so that it seems likely this is one of the general ideas of the Japanese about themselves. (It is notable, by the way, that though they are constantly asking foreigners "What do you think of us?" the replies do not seem greatly to affect the fixed body of *idées reçues* they already have about "Japanese character, temperament," etc.). I am unconvinced that the Japanese do not hold strict

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ideas of privacy and do not suffer great pangs of guilt. The difference between them and us in this is more, I think, one of kind. On occasion, when I felt peculiarly at home with Japanese people (and as the visit, short though it was, progressed this was most of the time) I brought out a number of "personal" statements about myself. The reaction was not wholly favourable. The older Japanese attempted, not very successfully, to overlook what they felt to be an odd breach of manners. The middle-aged and young (most of whom are anti-traditional and Western-ising-liberal, at any rate in aim if not in achievement), after a gulp, welcomed my indiscretions as a further blow to tradition. Both parties reported me as "a man who forces us to change our view of what an English gentleman is like." This verdict expressed by the older people was sharp and disapproving, the same verdict expressed by the younger group was admiring. Of course, their surprise was doubled by the fact that I was English and the English are known for their reserve, but I saw nothing to confirm that the Japanese are any less reserved about their "private affairs," although custom, of course, lays different emphasis on what is private and what not.

As to sense of sin or guilt, religion is far more broken down and for longer in Japan than with us, and sin in the sense we understand it is not an acutely-felt reality. But anxiety about breach of custom, of decorum is still very strong: it is felt perhaps more strongly by those who would like to be free from it than sin is by non-Christians in Europe. Since this custom and decorum extends into every province of life I cannot believe that the burden of conscience for the Japanese is any less than for us. In fact, I suspect it is greater.

I doubt if the Japanese felt free to comment on the American authors' apparent drunkenness because they had no conception of private matters. (In any case, is drunkenness at a public reception by reporters a private matter?) They mentioned it because drunkenness alone, of the few boltholes that they have against the awful pressure of decorous and suitable behaviour, is regarded as a privileged, almost whimsical, behaviour. A drunken man is a privileged man, a sort of holy innocent. Many of the large number of drunks we saw in Japan were far less drunk than they pretended, but they were seizing the excuse to break through the barrier of social custom. A barrier that demands such means of evasion cannot, I believe, weigh much less heavily than our sense of sin, however different its origin.

I would note, by the way, that those drunks or pretended drunks to whom I talked behaved in fact only a very little differently from the others—they were the same polite, charming, and easily lovable people that one met most of the time. I cannot help suspecting that, though the circumscription of life presses irksomely upon many Japanese, especially upon younger ones, they do not have much idea or imagination of what they would or could do outside the confines of life as they know it. This may well relate to the overwhelming sense of geographical isolation that one gets in Japan. A point to which I shall return.

ALL this brings me on to what has most preoccupied me in retrospect since I left Japan. What gave me such a very favourable impression of the Japanese people? I cannot easily find specific reasons for this general impression. A cynic might say from reading S.S.'s first paragraph that what delighted him and me in Japan was the fuss made of us. Anyone who saw us both then would know that we enjoyed it. But lionising, like *Gemütlichkeit* or charm, if they are backed up by no more than the desire to please, will pall after a very short while. Indeed the visitor is liable to feel he has been made a fool of and to react unfavourably in the end. It is a reaction one easily gets with, say, Austrians. That does not happen in Japan.

Again, many visitors to the P.E.N. Congress pointed to the high position occupied by literature in Japan—the esteem enjoyed by authors in popular papers. They delighted in pointing out how what our International

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President called *"le petit peuple japonais"* treated writers as celebrities—they usually meant, of course, the chambermaids, restaurant hostesses, and barboys who had seen the photographs in the morning paper. In so far as this is not just a disguised way of saying that you like being lionised, it belongs to the familiar argument that artists are not sufficiently regarded in popular esteem by the English as they are in Europe. I have never myself felt that this sort of culture snobbery was either attractive in a nation or helpful to its literature. At its best, as in Scandinavia, where it really does mean more than snobbery and is in fact a general serious regard for the arts, it is, of course, commendable. It does not, however, necessarily make Scandinavians lovable. I doubt if the Japanese are as serious as the Scandinavians in their widespread profession of regard for culture, but they leave one with this curious feeling of affection for them.

S.S. says that they are really interested in one's replies to their questions about Japan. They may be, but as I have said, I doubt if they alter their stereotypes much as a result. He also says that they do not want polite answers. I'm not quite sure about this. I think they want interesting answers, and they probably feel that criticism is more interesting and therefore a greater praise than overt praise. But it is true a very high percentage of the middle-aged and younger people one meets are "bothered and bewildered." They are still reeling—as who would not be?—under Hiroshima. I did not find any growth yet of a "younger still" body of opinion which was anxious to put, not only the failure of the old nationalism, but also the liberalising, Westernising reaction to it, behind them. When, if ever, this attitude appears it will be then that the present Weimarism may change into some new totalitarian movement. But I think S.S. is right to point out that such Western historical analogies should not be too closely pressed upon Asian situations. Too many European or American commentators on the scene take it for granted that the present bewilderment and anxiety to achieve a Western liberal outlook among the younger Japanese will inevitably meet disillusion and cause a return to the voice of national demagogy. I even felt on occasion that for some Westerners the charm of the Japanese lay in their being a "fated," or a "lost people."

This view, of course, fits in well with certain aspects of Japanese culture. Their literature, except for the odd novel like Ooka's *Fires on the Plain*, is permeated by this depressing and sterile nostalgia, this constant harping upon the fleetingness of beauty, of happiness, and of human life. For the older generation it still finds its expression—as we see in Kawabata's or Tanizaki's novels—in the old "meeting and parting," ill-fated love affairs of Japanese traditional love and the traditional settings of the hot springs, the Noh and Kabuki plays, the geishas, the ceremonies of flower arrangement and tea-making, the contemplation of the autumn maple-leaves changing colour. The fact that all this tradition is under fierce attack from the younger generation, and is possibly on the way out, only makes it seem to them a more fit—because more sad—subject for art. I find this aspect of Japanese culture highly depressing. It is tied to a dead Western world—to Maupassant, Chekhov, and most significantly Herman Hesse who is a living name to old and young alike. The tea-making and the flower decoration seemed to me arty and "tatty" and I suspect that even the best art produced under the spell of all this shares in these unfortunate qualities. When we turn to younger generations we find that the same quality is there, though it seeks its inspiration in other western models —Faulkner, Sartre, James Deanism, the Left Bank world which S.S. noted in the film of "Banka" reminding me of the dreariness of *"Quai des Brumes."* All these are loved mainly for their quality of sweet, autumn hopelessness. The name of Eliot's *Waste Land*—just the two words, not the poem—seems sometimes to hang like an evil and absurd charm over all this aspect of Japanese life.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that part of the Japanese charm *does* lie in their mixed-up-kiddism. It has all the self-centredness of

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its Western counterpart, but it has got something more. Few Western mixed-up kids really want to solve their mix-up, even fewer have any energy or capacity to carry out any solution they are offered. But even the most coffee-bar Japanese are only so for certain hours of the day, and for very limited hours at that. For the rest of the time they follow a very different rôle—that of the Good Apprentice. They work, and work very hard. For an Englishman like myself—part romantic, part Calvinist—this makes them a very attractive people. The good apprentice and the mixed-up kid—it is not perhaps a very promising schizophrenia—one is taken back immediately to our old parallel of Weimar Germany. If the Good Apprentice was concerned only with self-satisfied self-advancement, it would not be very promising. There is a good deal of smug ambition, rugged individualism in the country which so welcomed Samuel Smiles when Western thought first came there. Personal ambition was even given to me as a reason for Japanese war atrocities—if atrocity was the means to promotion then let us excel in it in all ranks! It is a very likely answer, I think. But there is not just self-seeking and dreaming of ideals, with no bridge between. I talked to more than one young man about the difficulties of improving economic conditions and strengthening trade unionism in a still paternalistic industrial framework and their discussions were neither starry-eyed nor narrowly self-interested. If the mixed-up kids were all self-centredly taking pleasure in being mixed up, this would be as hopeless as it is in the West. But they do not like being mixed up, they are bored with it and actually—which is unusual for Japanese—laugh at it.

Or perhaps I am only saying that they are nearer to earth, as we understand it, more empirical than other Asians. For, of course, the Japanese gained greatly by being in the setting of a mixed congress of Westerners and Asians. They have, as I have written, their guilts and tensions in plenty, they have (the younger generation particularly) grave doubts of themselves; but they do not have that eroding inferiority complex which seeks to right itself in a constant stressing of moral and spiritual superiority over the West that is annoying among the bulk of, for example, Indians and Pakistanis and prevents them from making a contribution to discussions commensurate with their world importance. Nor do we ex-imperial nations of the West have the same inhibiting sense of guilt towards Japan that we have towards Indians or Pakistanis. Most Western delegates tried, and I am sure they were right, to throw off this sense of guilt, to admit the past and then to stress the useful contributions that the West can make to the East. But it is an uphill and perhaps hopeless task, at any rate for some decades. If we spoke of the value that differences between East and West meant for cultural reciprocity, we were interpreted as stressing the inferiority of the East. If, as Moravia did, we attempted an analysis of the benefit that humanism had made to civilisation, we were reminded of the failures of Western materialism, the deep untouched spiritual values of the East.

At times I felt that imperialism's guilt lay in exactly this—the vapid, high-minded generalising mist into which Indian and Pakistani thought had evaporated. To them our empiricism as well as our humanistic irony were only another repeat performance of shallow Western materialism. The Japanese—typical irony of history—got the praises of both sides. The West were in full sympathy with the younger generation, its doubts and determination, a little sceptical of the ivory tower of the older traditionalist Japanese writers. The Asians stress how much at home they felt in traditional Japan, pouring cold water on the younger Japanese, asserting that their Westernism and their doubts were a passing mood of youth. And, of course, how pleasant for us all to feel able so much to like hosts who had received us so warmly and with such charm.

NEVERTHELESS I had more and more during my few weeks in Japan the feeling that these many hundred people to whom I spoke were, in their courageous efforts to realise themselves, living under a

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peculiar tension. Most people in most countries, of course, are living under tension—tensions peculiar to their countries, too, that go beyond global atomic threats, tensions of a nation on the way up or on the way down, or in the saddle and frightened of its position. The Japanese tension, I think, is peculiarly frightening because for many reasons it has reached the hypnotic stage. The stress of strenuous, solemn, comparatively unenjoyed play and of long, immolating hours of work threatens to be overwhelming—and however one may support the younger generation in their rejection of the old traditional life with its Samurai undertones, it did —I imagine, for the educated classes at any rate—provide a conscious relaxation which life in Japan sorely needs. As it is, I think, they are very near to exhaustion. S.S. has said that unlike other Asian nations they have a standard of living, they know what it means, and they want to improve it. But nevertheless for millions of workers—black-coated, intellectual, and manual—it is pitiably low. Moravia and I noticed how often in trains at midday and in cool weather, the occupants one and all fell asleep. Tension that ends in lethargy could so well get into the debilitating, self-pitying, falling-leaf side of their cultural heritage and leave them open to the wiles of the first false siren song that reached their ears. And all this in the most claustrophobic isolation.

The isolation of most of the educated—and education, or at any rate literacy, is widespread—can hardly be conceived. Of, for example, all the vast number in this overcrowded island who know the English language well and its literature a little more hazily. When, unless they get the few rare grants or are successful business men, are they ever likely to go outside Japan? Academic knowledge of the English language is profound, so that a special pure English may well be found in Japan in a hundred years' time that is lost here or in the United States. But this is not the food they desperately seek. They are confined to their ugly cities—cities so threatened and so often demolished are necessarily so. They must make the most of Kyoto and Nara, which apart from the wonderful sculptures in the museums will hardly compare with the beauties of Western show-place cities or, for example, with Bangkok. True, of course, they have a picturesque countryside—part Switzerland, part Côte d'Azur, and on the coast at any rate wonderful and unique. But countryside is never the food for a restless, searching generation. Perhaps this accounts for two odd phenomena: for the totally neglected roads, creating a land of crowded train travel for the many and easy air travel for the business few—a land without the solace of motor-touring so essential to relieve the claustrophia of the middle classes in industrial countries; and for the strange fact reported to us, that there are large stretches of quite virgin land in the North despite the appallingly overcrowded towns of the centre.

I fear that I have allowed an excessive gloom to cover a land and people that I immensely liked. The truth is that all this is more potential than actual. The Japanese seldom smile, except to please Westerners, yet they do laugh and their laughter is not hysteric but is the result of a real sense of comedy and absurdity, a laugh of enjoyment. It is this that makes one ready to stand by one's conviction, so difficult to back up with examples, that the Japanese are not only moving and courageous, objects of compassion, but also intelligent and successful, subjects for admiration.

Angus Wilson

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Lawrence Durrell

The Shades of Dylan Thomas

MUCH WAS written about Thomas immediately after his untimely death, but for the most part it took the form of obituary, eulogy, and criticism. Fifty years from now his readers will want to know other things, about the way he looked and talked and wrote—for these are the little things which bring a poet alive to his readers; they are perhaps worth jotting down, even though I was not a close friend of his and my memories of him are of an early period, when *18 Poems* had woken the world of poetry up to the fact that a new and original poet had sprung out of Wales. Others will have better stories of his latest period. It is to be hoped that they won't be lost, or snowed under by anecdotes of his wildness and improvidence only. For he was an original in his way.

I first met him quite by chance; on a flying visit to England I had been commissioned by Henry Miller to investigate the story that Anna Wickham, the poetess, had a large private diary for publication, parts of which might be regarded as actionable if produced in England itself. I called on her to see if there was any truth in the story. She was a rather formidable person, of intimidating size and forthrightness—and I soon found out that her diary was a myth. (She afterwards hanged herself from the window-sash of her house because cigarettes went up in price—a noble protest at the English way of life.) While I was talking to her, Thomas came into the room and introduced himself. He had caught the name of Henry Miller—whom he deeply admired—and wanted to know what was going forward. He was then a slim, neat young man with well-trimmed hair and a well-cut suit—anything less like the sublunary golliwog I was to meet years later cannot be imagined. His voice was low and musical, his smile ready. Since he wanted to know more about the Paris Group, as he called it, I was delighted that he should elect to share a long bus ride back to Notting Hill Gate with me; we talked and became good friends. He was full of eager questions about Miller, most of which I was able to answer; and in return I questioned him about his own work which he took seriously but not too seriously. He was particularly amused by our attempts to revitalise *The Booster* (Official Publication Of The American Country Club, Paris, France). By some stroke of fate this periodical, so like *The Hairdresser* in format, had come into the possession of Alfred Perles who had been instructed to turn it into a Paris version of the *New Yorker*. As Perles cordially detested the paper's owner, he decided to make it really good; and this is where we came in. *The Booster* became so good so quickly that within three numbers it had not only lost all its advertising but had provoked the President to the Club to threaten us with an action under French laws of obscenity. It became an act of wisdom to transfer *The Booster* to London where it lived on for two numbers under the incognito of *Delta*, before dying. Some of Thomas' work was first printed here. It is worth mentioning, perhaps, that today bound sets fetch up to sixty pounds second-hand!

All this gossip seemed to delight Thomas,

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who confessed that he found the English literary scene rather dull and he promised us contributions, which he duly sent so long as we were in Paris. I found him then very self-possessed and single-minded and with a marvellous sense of the comic. He was not, I thought, very widely read—indeed, reading bored him somewhat. He liked some novels, and mentioned Dickens and Lawrence with enthusiasm. But though he had heard of Freud and Jung, he had not at this time read either. He listened with attention to what one had to say but gave the impression of knowing exactly what interested him, and being unwilling to waste energies outside his chosen field. I imagine true poets must be like that, shielding their sensibilities against distracting intrusions from the world of ideas. I liked him awfully, too, because he believed in hard work and said that he never released a poem until he had tested every nut and bolt in its body. We drank a farewell beer at the local and promised to keep in touch, which we did for years, exchanging vigorous and jolly messages whenever I happened to be in England but too far away perhaps to reach him.

I tried, I remember, to persuade him to come back to Paris with us and then on to Corfu for a summer. I thought the Mediterranean would blind him with its colours and perhaps help him dig new veins for his verse —the image is a happy one, for his poems rattled and banged away in the darkness like convoys of coal-trucks. And you could always hear the sound of the rock-drill in the best of them. But he sheered away from France and Greece—and wrote saying he preferred to mix his colours from the greys and browns of Wales. He couldn't be budged on this.

LATER that year (1937, I think) when the editorial staff of *The Booster* took incontinently to its heels and fled from the threat of persecution by the French to the more liberal atmosphere of London, I found myself piloting Miller (trembling and swearing) past the Customs at Dover. (He had been turned back once before and had developed a formidable phobia of English Customs officials.) Furtively in another part of the crowd came Alfred Perles wearing dark glasses which would have deceived nobody—so like an illegal psychoanalyst did he look at the best of times. We joined forces on the train and there was much rejoicing. We had a bottle of beer and an editorial conference in which we decided to change Booster to Delta and see just how much English printers could be made to stand.

Miller had compiled a list of people he wanted to meet, at the head of which stood the name D. Thomas, followed in brackets by the words "crazy Welsh poet."

Anais Nin's husband, Hugo Guyler the painter, also happened to be Hugo Guyler the banker and patron of the arts; he allowed us to make his London flat our headquarters and thoughtfully furnished it with six cases of a good Bordeaux against such entertaining as we might have to do. And here we organised a few dinner parties which would enable Henry Miller to meet writers of his own calibre. They were good evenings. For a while it was hard to locate Thomas, and then I ran him down. He was living in Hammersmith and was delighted at a chance to meet Miller. But, alas! on the evening in question he kept us waiting hours and we were on the point of giving him up for lost when the telephone rang. He said in hollow, muffled tones: "I can't find the flat so I'm not coming." He wasn't tipsy. He just sounded terribly nervous and ill at ease. "Where are you now?" I said, "Because I'll get a taxi and fetch you." That startled him. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I'm just too afraid to come. You'll have to excuse me." He then told me that he was telephoning from the pub immediately opposite the house. "Stay there," I said, and ran out across the road to meet him and lay hands on him. I hadn't seen him for some time and he had altered a good deal. He was the golliwog poet of the later portraits —(there is one of him by that marvellous photographer, Bill Brandt, which should by now be on every bottle of stout in the kingdom). He was ruffled and tousled and looked as if he had been sleeping in a haystack. He had a huge muffler round his throat. He was

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also extremely jumpy and touchy and said he was too frightened to move from the pub and that I should stay there and have a drink with him. This I did, and after a bit his nervous aggressiveness died down and I was able to suggest dinner. I painted a ludicrous picture of poor Henry Miller walking round and round the dinner-table cursing him until I prevailed upon him to come with me. Once we left the pub he completely changed, became absolutely himself, and took the whole thing with complete assurance and sang-froid. Within ten minutes the nervous man was teasing Miller and enjoying Hugo Guyler's good wine—and indeed offering to read us his latest poems, which he did there and then. Miller was delighted, too, and Thomas thereupon launched into a fragment of poetic prose with his curious pulpiteer's thrasonical voice; I didn't awfully like the way he read —and only when I heard him on the radio did I realise the full power and beauty of his voice.

We talked and drank late into the night and altogether it was a splendid evening; and from then on we met fairly frequently, though he would never come direct to the house. He always rang up from the pub and forced me to have a drink with him there before he would come into the house. I don't know why.

I had several chances of discussing poetic theory with him then, and he answered questions with complete certitude, honestly and quickly. He had few preconceived views about what poetry should or shouldn't be. He wrote slowly, I found to my surprise, and with difficulty in that small square hand—I always imagined his work falling out red-hot into the mould. He also mutated adjectives and nouns until he squeezed them into the right shape to suit his theme. He went on worrying them for ages before he was satisfied. I saw one phrase which filled a whole exercise book, repeated over and over again in different ways.

We argued a good deal, too, and I remember accusing him of being more interested in sound than in meaning—which he denied. But he agreed that he played all his shots, so to speak, from up at the net: every one was a smash-hit. He liked the simile and said with approval: "That's it. No mercy on the reader." But he was robust and without any self-importance and rejoiced in a laugh.

I was reading a good deal in the Museum at this time, and used to spend my lunch hours drifting about the manuscript room. It is always thrilling to see a page of the original Don Juan, or something in Keats' own handwriting. I never tired of it. One day, in an unfrequented corner of the room, I saw what I took to be a page of Dylan Thomas. I was surprised to find it was a page of an Emily Brontë MS, and I was so struck with the similarity that I bought a sixpenny facsimile and posted it to Thomas. The next day he wrote: "Strange that facsimile by E. B. I thought it was a rejected poem of mine when I opened it. Yes, it's my handwriting, and I can read every word of it." A day or two after this I happened on a picture of the three Brontë girls (is it by Bramwell, unfinished?) and I was struck by a resemblance between Emily and Dylan Thomas. The dark, slightly popping eye, the toneless skin and dark hair.... I told him about it, and he was amused and delighted; and when I accused him of being a reincarnation of her he agreed at once and added: "And what is so strange about that? She's the only woman I've ever loved!"

I remember several meetings that Spring, before I went abroad again; not all are worth writing about—for some were boisterous and silly, and some unproductive of anything but good-natured noise. Thomas, under the physical and mental robustness, was quite a sensitive person and rather tended to use his boisterousness as a defence against people who might bore him and make demands on him. He did not care for conversation about writing, and was not really interested enough in ideas to give much thought to them. These things invaded the privacy he felt he needed for his work. He wanted to make himself more sensitive and less conscious. "You know," he once said, "when I'm in company which contains admirers or fans or

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fellow-writers, I begin to feel I'm under false pretences. That is why I act the clown." And he could be a splendid clown. When he was in a rip-roaring mood he seemed to attract to him everything that was fantastic and unreal in the air around him. I went for one pub-crawl with him which was as full of comic and unreal incidents as an Irish novel. Indeed the grotesque and unreal in events and people always stepped to Thomas' elbow when he started clowning. It was as if he had touched off a secret spring of lunacy in reality itself. It was a splendid form of safety, I suppose, to move in a coloured cloud of real-life fantasies. Once I visited thirteen drinking clubs in an afternoon with him in an attempt to trace a pair of shoes which he had absently taken off in one of them—he did not remember which. The types of people we met, and the hallucinating conversations which ramified around these shoes would have made a whole novel. In one place three old men helped him crawl under a bar to see if they were there, and one of them got stuck and couldn't be got out; in another he nearly got tattooed by an elderly Indian; in a third . . . It was like a Joyce Cary novel. And finally, he told me, that when he got home he found the shoes standing beside his bed. He had simply forgotten to put them on. . . .

Yes, a splendid clown and a splendid poet. But under the clowning and the planned appearances of this wild and woolly public figure there was a somebody quieter, somebody very much harassed by a gift; and I like to think of him in those early days. I am sure others who knew him well will have more interesting memories of him. I hope these lines may persuade his friends to write them down before they fade.

A Skull By The Sea

Stark on the tide's territory
A bone in the sterile wind
Stuck in the wrack and wastage of the salt
Where the wind into snakes tears the sand
And scrapes the bright bone bare,
Where the cold lives of pebble and worm
Revolve remote from the bestial fields
And the warm farm.

Through the roaring sky, sun with a stab
Lights the waste of the reed and gull,
With a sword from the cloud
Transfixes the bone and writes
Its white shape in the cave
Of the green impending wave.

The westward cloud wraps the light.
The ringing beach resumes
Its fierce antiquity and the wind
Its scoriation of the bone.

Roy Ashwell

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Merdeka Diary

THE new airport building at Kuala Lumpur is very "Festival of Britain" with plenty of plastic fittings and a pleasant mural—mildly in the Diego Rivera manner—in the waiting-hall. Its outside lines, running upwards into an array of flagpoles, were so stuck up with yellow stars, bunting, and the complicated heraldry of Malaya that, looking them up and down, I felt as intrigued as with the tattooed arm of a sailor.

My flight-neighbour from Singapore had been a rather untypical specimen of the white tycoon, lean and reserved. But his comment as we crossed the tarmac had the accustomed edge. "The joke about this whole business," he said, "is that the Europeans have paid for most of these decorations. My firm's given ten thousand dollars. The Chinese have given a lot too—and they're getting absolutely nothing out of it all." A row of taxis waited in the placid sunshine: and as we moved away between the banana trees my fat Malay driver had his own remark to make on Merdeka and the rôle of Europeans. "Merdeka no good for taxis. Europeans use taxis. Europeans go away. Malays and Chinese no use taxis; use bus." He punctuated these pessimistic utterances with short bursts of laughter.

But during this August in Malaya it was not the sceptical measurement of things but the rarity of other sentiments that one noted. The emotional reactions called forth in Indonesia in 1950 if you even spoke the words "national independence" are almost absent among Malayans to-day. What some townspeople said to me may not have been typical but it was very different from what their equivalents in Jakarta and Surabaya were saying while Indonesia celebrated their Merdeka:

A young reporter (Indian): "I keep my fingers crossed. If anything goes wrong it'll be the ruin of this whole population."

An official of retiring age (English-speaking Chinese): "Merdeka—like for Indonesia!" (with gloomy reflectiveness).

A nurse (English-speaking Chinese): "We don't know if it'll be for better or worse. I think for worse."

A young Malay taxi-driver: "When Merdeka is given it brings good luck."

An old Malay gardener: "Let's see if we get more to eat. I'm not interested in what the big shots do unless we get more to eat."

Another Malay taxi-driver: "Merdeka is good. With Merdeka you can do everything. Like flying aeroplanes. There's no control any more. Until now the British controlled all those things."

Although the Chinese of Malaya number forty per cent. of the population, this is a Malay show. A small group of Malay aristocrats are running the new nation. The mild but shrewd face of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister, crops up in unexpected places—on your crockery, on postage-stamps, on the wall of a barber's shop. The rather gloomy-looking headquarters of the United Malays National Organisation, sandwiched between a Chinese motor-store and a Chinese refrigerator firm, opened a shop which must be a crest-collector's paradise. In it can be bought: Merdeka medals of aluminium "anodised in gold with tricolour and ribbon"; Merdeka celluloid badges "with safety-pin at back"; Merdeka memorial plaques "in attractive colours on highly polished wooden base"; Merdeka decoration-lamps; and Merdeka shields "surmounted by flags." You can also get Merdeka transfers, Merdeka table-spoons "with beautiful transparent plastic box," and bronze table-dishes bearing, in colour, a full-face portrait of Tunku Abdul Rahman. All these excellent mementoes, carrying Malay insignia, are manufactured by the resourceful Chinese firm of Wing Sun.

IT's hard not to believe that someone has been at work "building up" the Tunku, an extremely human but by no means inspired Malay, into "a local Soekarno." It's an attempt that probably reveals insight into the simple mentality of a peasant electorate but it is also an incitement to flippancy. A few months ago the cabinet decided that a special ceremonial dress ought to be designed for Malayan ministers and diplo-

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matists. Experts were called in and pictures of Tunku Abdul Rahman, wearing a variety of gold-braided trousers, white dinner-jackets, red cummerbunds, satin coats with epaulettes, and Malay headdress appeared in the daily press—as one newspaper put it "showing an impressive pose." The tailor chosen to execute the designs, a comfortable Sikh, sits in the doorway of his emporium in Mountbatten Road wearing a neat beard-net and prepared to be kind to inquisitive visitors who want to interview him about his distinction in becoming tailor to the cabinet.

The man who, *au fond*, probably takes these portentous doings least seriously is Tunku Abdul Rahman himself. One of the gayest of Asian students during his Cambridge days, he has certainly not lost his sense of humour since then. It was he who did most to inject the "carnival spirit" into the Merdeka celebrations. "Let's go singing and whistling into independence," he characteristically told one of his audiences. The Malayans like this. Thirteen months ago the Tunku requested that a new Merdeka Sports Stadium be built (he is a soccer fan) and, although some critics murmured that a dozen schools could have been put up for that money, the Public Works Department carried the job through on time. Architecturally it is a graceful performance with four tall concrete standards for flood-lighting and, along the rim, a sight of palm trees and mountains which stand out beautifully when the sky is streaked with tropical sunrise. "PWD" in Malaya has always had more than utilitarian standards and justice has hardly been done to its architects of half a century ago, Norman and Hubback, who designed the railway station and secretariat building in Kuala Lumpur (Mr. Betjeman would surely be interested in this Victorian-Moorish style). The architect of the new stadium, S. E. Jewkes, would probably agree that his creation is "South Bank" in spirit. Its sporting début was on Merdeka day when Singapore and Vietnam drew, 5-5.

A friendly district officer motored me to a remote Malay kampong (village). Brown, bony old fellows squatted under step-ladders leading up to shacks on stilts. Mention of Merdeka brought forth approving murmurs, "Bagus! Bagus!" ("Good! Good!") they said. But when I asked why it was good a silence of sickening embarrassment followed. The government information officers in those parts found out that in the isolated kampongs, which hide bashfully among palm-tree clumps on the wide, flooded plains, the peasants believe that Merdeka means the end of all District Officers and all taxes. Teams were hastily formed to go and tell the "elders" of the villages that Merdeka means nothing of the kind. And they've got the harder job of explaining to the country people what Merdeka does mean.

The kampongs are moving slowly. Kuala Manis through which I walked—to the horror of small children who scattered wailing at my approach—was being prodded into digging latrines and making use of the nearest rural clinic by an obviously indefatigable headman. But he was meeting his difficulties. Among the coconut palms he told us with resigned indignation that the path we were walking along could not be widened to take cars, because the villager whose land abutted on it would not give up for nothing even a narrow strip; and there were no funds available to pay him compensation. In the fields the emerald green of freshly-planted padi showed above the water. The land-hunger in this part of Malaya—the "rice-bowl" of the country—is already intense, with a population that increases by three or four per cent. every year; and there are plans to provide fresh land in the interior for peasants to clear and then plant with rubber. (This is a fairly tough proposition because six years must pass between the planting of rubber and the first yield, and the peasant has got to live in the meantime.)

SEVERAL years ago I saw Chinese squatter cultivators in Malaya being taken away by British troops from casual, lonely settling places where Communist bands were extorting food from them. They were moved unwillingly in thousands by lorry—often carrying the planks of their rough huts with them—to be grouped together in larger "new villages" where police protection was at hand. I revisited one of these new villages just before Merdeka. Most of the huts have bright coats of paint, and the impression now is of a semi-urban community. A local towkay (rich man) has erected a cement cinema, and there is a children's playground with green-painted slides and swings. Even the poorest of these Chinese families—they are mostly rubber tappers or building labourers—has a stand-pipe with tapped water within easy reach; and every hut has electric lighting. In the old squatters' places, that I remembered, wells, or more often streams, had been the water supply, and a kerosene lamp the best that could be expected in the way of lighting. Not that the poorer huts are very different from the rough ones of the squatting days. There are the same earth floors, and in a few cases, still roofs of palm leaves. Chickens and geese stroll in and out pecking at rice grains on the ground. There are the same little wooden shelves with joss-sticks burning in jars for ancestors, the same charm-papers stuck to the door-posts. But the better-off families have cement flooring, zinc roofs, radio sets, and

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calendars with glamour pictures of Hong Kong cabaret beauties.

The special effort made for the Chinese squatters—simply because they were supplying food to the Communists—has become a sore point with many Malays. The scattered, tiny Malay kampongs are far less easily serviced with water and lighting than the compact "new villages" of the rural Chinese. I understood the feelings of the young, awakened Malays about the predicament of their race as I watched a diesel-engined boat manned by Malay fishermen put out one evening from an estuary village. The boat did not belong to them, neither did the nets. The proceeds of the catch were to be shared equally between them and the owner, a Chinese, but they would have no means of knowing how much was obtained. The Chinese owner alone did the marketing. One of the fishermen told me that in the off-season he repaired the boat and nets for a small loan which he had to repay to the owner after fishing started again. And yet these fishermen seemed happy in their dependence. It's the educated Malay, the intellectual, who resents all this.

THE moment of Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur struck on a characteristic note. A rally of the ruling Alliance Party was held on the cricket field of the European Selangor Club—commonly known as "the Dog" (possibly because its black and white pseudo-Tudor timbering could with a stretch of the imagination be called spotted). The timing of the rally, as arranged, was to a split second. At eleven fifty-five Tunku Abdul Rahman's car was to pull up, headed by motorcycle outriders. Searchlights and all other lighting were to switch off for two minutes; and on the stroke of midnight the Union Jack was to be hauled down and the Malayan national flag was to challenge the breeze. But things did not work out quite exactly. The Tunku was five minutes late; the lights did not extinguish themselves but flickered on and off in curiously "Götterdämmerung" fashion; and the bystanders waited seven minutes in some suspense for the Union Jack to bite the dust. A rumour had spread among Europeans that the Malayan leaders had had last-minute compunction and would not insist on this final act of prostration. However, with only the brief respite the thing indeed occurred.

Much miscellaneous intelligence had circulated in Kuala Lumpur about what would happen on that night before Merdeka. It was said that certain young planters contemplated abusive rhetoric from the pavilion steps of "the Dog"—fired by their customary *stengahs* (whiskies and soda); that the United Malay Youth, pierced with the ill-feeling nurtured by many years of alternate patronage and bad language from the tuans and their memsahibs (especially the memsahibs) would storm "the Dog" and burn it to the ground. I was firmly expectant when I entered the Selangor Club at ten o'clock on the night of Friday, 30th August.

The hospitable member (a total stranger) who gestured to me to join him had knocked back an early quota. "I've been teaching these people for twenty-five years, and now I'm here on the touchline to watch this!" he said with a deliberation and emphasis which could have carried several interpretations. Then he stood me several whiskies and told me with a scholar's affection about the rural arts of the Malay State where he had spent much of his career. Occasionally when loud-speaker messages to participants in the rally rang out loudly in Malay from the cricket field outside, he translated them for me. He had just told me that the long bar of "the Dog" features in "Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant," when I noticed that two non-members were entering the club. They were very pretty and very thin, like so many Malay women, and the rally had evidently given them a thirst. In spite of their wide, straight dresses and voluminous muslins they had no difficulty in circumventing the metal-tube barriers specially constructed "in case of trouble" on the pavilion steps facing the cricket field.

They ordered two orange squashes at the bar and went to a nearby table. My host rose resolutely to his feet; and I was nervous and prepared for a complicated situation. He swept his arms sideways in an admirably synchronised movement. "Dudok sini!" (Sit here!) he said; and in a few seconds the Malay beauties were in the two empty chairs at our table. The weave of their sarongs interested my friend, and they answered his questions gaily. But all too soon they rejoined their compatriots outside. "Malu! Malu!" ("Shy! Shy!") exclaimed the administrator. Later the tables of European diners around me applauded seriously and politely as the Malayan youth wheeled and drilled on the grass. The least sympathetic spectator was a young Britisher who suddenly asked, "What's all this in aid of?"

FOR several days before the big night, Kuala Lumpur was en fête. The bunting and flags —including the Union Jack—which hung across shop fronts and in doorways multiplied steadily. And on 30th August strings of fairy lights joined them. Tens of thousands of visitors from other States of Malaya began coming to Kuala Lumpur on the 27th. A Ceylonese friend of mine entertained six relatives from Penang, one from Malacca, and seven from Johore, in a small house. Little Chinese hotels which normally

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charged ten shillings a night were asking three pounds. But the flood of visitors were tourists, not nationalists in search of history. They had come to see the sights, to enjoy a carnival, to indulge the Asian love of a show, not to share in the shaping of a country's destiny. The cricket field was nowhere near filled to capacity for the Alliance rally. I walked about as midnight struck and as the leader yelled "Merdeka!" but the Malay families near me were gazing silently as if at their first sight of the Big Dipper. The following night the crowd for a lakeside firework display was many times larger.

What interested me in the Malayan-British ceremony at the Merdeka Stadium on 31st August were the Malay Sultans' entrances—studied and slow under yellow or orange umbrellas held by attendants. It was a scene straight out of an East India Company print in which Nabobs lounge while Rajahs preen themselves under their canopies. ("How much of all this'll be repeated on the second anniversary?" asked a sceptical republican friend from Indonesia at my side.) The cherry-red carpet leading to a beflowered dais, and the heralds' fanfares completed the kingly-feudal setting of this send-off to the third surviving monarchy—after Japan and Thailand—in East Asia. ("This is what Indonesia *used* to be like," said my friend.) The terraces of the stadium were spotted with Malay songkoks, and pretty with coloured Malay sarongs. Chinese and Indian faces were fewer. When Tunku Abdul Rahman read the proclamation of independence in Malay he got intermittent applause. The translation, spoken in English—for the benefit of the English-speaking Indians and Chinese in the audience—got none.

An intrusion of the "South Bank" spirit made the installation of the Supreme Ruler at his new palace seem less Malay—in spite of a grand variety of traditional costume—than the royal episode in the open-air of the stadium. The throne room, with its zinc roof, is a kind of elegant hangar, and the palace itself is plastery and insubstantial-looking like an exhibition building that gets pulled down after use. During the enthronement I kept thinking of Rickett's décor for "Saint Joan." The lines of the red and yellow canopy and curtains surrounding the throne were so very clean and "essential." But some Malay flute-music conjured up a jungle kingdom. Among the audience there were as many European as Asian faces. ("This was the dream of Van Mook, the last Dutch Governor of Indonesia," said my Indonesian friend.)

THE bull-fights were a serious source of controversy. The Minister of Agriculture—an uncompromising nationalist—had found a ready sympathiser in Tunku Abdul Rahman, the racing enthusiast and soccer fan, for his idea of reviving an essentially Malay sport as part of the celebrations. The trouble was that the British, with their incurable Puritanism, had contrived years before that this old Malay village pastime, with its incitements to gambling, should cease, and the ban was still in force and had support among Malayans. However, in Parliament, a few weeks before Merdeka, the Chief Minister vanquished opposition by a glancing reference to horse-racing, which has been fostered by the British in their colonies, and a new bill was passed permitting bull-fighting on special public occasions.

Hemingway would have liked the spectacle. The bulls were brought down by their owners—hard-swearing, turbaned peasants from Kelantan—and trained for three weeks on the sweet grass of the Kuala Lumpur racecourse, and on honey and stout. Their combat takes the form of butting and wrestling with interlocked horns—but if one bull exposes a flank he is soon in trouble (though the horns had been specially blunted as a concession to public opinion). A bull who refuses battle is counted out. One furious-looking beast did better and took a flying leap out of trouble, clearing the five foot double fencing round the ring, and leaving traces of this steeple-chasing on the white shirts of press photographers near me who an instant earlier had been seated on the rungs. The Malay trainers were lively "seconds," bringing their animals up to the starting point with leading-strings threaded through the bulls' noses and shouting "Bersorak! Bersorak!" ("Come on!"). The between-rounds technique was of impressive earthiness. One young groom thrust a bottle of water well down his bull's throat to refresh it, and then took a swig or two himself. Next time he held its jaws apart and spat in lustily.

On Merdeka eve I passed the pompous little statue of Frank Swettenham near the Selangor Club—Swettenham who organised can-can parties and was not averse to a little gambling in land. It struck me that, as he looked across the cricket field at the Alliance rally, the doyen of British Malayan administrators must be dismayed and affronted at seeing the long performance of his countrymen treated thus lightly. I discussed my fantasy with an Englishman who is finishing a long career in Malaya, a scholar and a liberal. "I doubt if you're right," was the reply. "I think he'd have said simply 'We were brought in to teach these people the arts of administration. If we hadn't been able to do it in eighty years we wouldn't have been much good.'"

All the same Merdeka has come very suddenly.

Derrick Sington

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

ITEMS:—In a report from Moscow, Aloisio Rendi writes in the Italian monthly, *Tempo Presente*, about an unexpected encounter on the other shore: he came across a file of ENCOUNTER in the Lenin Library in Moscow.... The September number of the Hungarian literary monthly, *Nagyvilag*, published four poems by Roy Campbell in Hungarian translation.... Konstantin Simonov, who was recently criticised by *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, has written an indignant letter to the editor of that paper, denying that two of his recent stories described the officers of the Soviet Army as idiots and cowards.... John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World* has been republished in Moscow, after twenty-seven years of suppression. The text has been only slightly tampered with: in one place a reference to the three top Bolshevik leaders—Lenin, Trotsky, and Lunacharsky—is missing. Trotsky's rôle in the Revolution is admitted, although an editorial comment suggests that he was a "concealed liquidator." The book has also been published in Hungary.... At about the time this issue of ENCOUNTER reaches our readers, Boris Pasternak's novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, will be published in an Italian edition. This work, some 700 pages long, is regarded by those who have seen the original Russian manuscript as one of the masterpieces of modern Russian literature. It is, apparently, a "non-political" novel, and reveals a religious bent of mind and sensibility that will not surprise those who have followed Pasternak's development. The Soviet authorities originally agreed to its publication at the height of the thaw, but they have since changed their minds. A. Surkov, head of the Soviet Writers' Union, actually travelled to Milan to try to persuade the Italian publisher to return the manuscript. His request was declined. French and English editions are now in preparation.

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In 1955, the Chinese sociologist, Fei Hsiao-Tung, was the subject of a controversy in ENCOUNTER (which included an interesting letter written by Fei himself to the editors). Now he once again is in the news: the Chinese Communist press has opened a combined assault on him as a "rightist bourgeois deviationist."

Fei Hsiao-Tung, author of *Peasant Life in China* and *China's Gentry*, studied in England and the United States but returned to Peking after the Communists had taken over. He became head of the University for National Minorities and was the co-author (in 1952) of a book *How My Thought Was Changed*, written apparently after a personal interview with Mao Tse-tung. The 1955 discussion arose from a review by Professor Karl Wittfogel in the August 1955 issue of ENCOUNTER of Fei's *China's Gentry*, in which Wittfogel suggested that Fei was now supporting—or pretending to support—policies that were alien to his way of thinking; and that he must be very disturbed by recent developments in the Chinese villages. For this, Wittfogel was severely taken to task by Cedric Dover, Professor William Empson, and eventually by Fei himself. Dover and Empson argued that Fei had been enthusiastic about the Chinese Communists for a long time and was sympathetically inclined towards their policies. His "sincerity had been smeared by Wittfogel"; there was full scope for his ideas and activities in China; and the suggestion that he was "muzzled" was a fantastic misrepresentation. Fei himself, in a long letter (ENCOUNTER, February 1956) claimed that Wittfogel's "war mongering" review was one great calumny against Fei as a person and Communist China as a whole.

At this point the ENCOUNTER debate on and around Fei had its inconclusive ending. Now, one learns from the Chinese counterpart of *Pravda*, the *Jen Min Jih Pao* (on August 18th and 31st, 1957), and from a communiqué put out by the Chinese News Agency on September 4th, that Fei has been accused—along with several of his colleagues—of various "anti-socialist" activities and particularly with trying to reintroduce bourgeois sociology in China. One of Fei's collaborators was accused of having malignantly slandered agricultural collectivisation by declaring that "human beings are used as if they were tractors." Professor Yang Chen'chih, a colleague of Fei in the Central Institute of Nationalities, flatly accused Fei of being a servile tool of imperialism. Fei had been a student in London of Malinowski ("a famous servant of British colonialism"). "Fei Hsiao-tung is adept in reactionary propaganda which he

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carried out under the guise of a scholar. He has been energetically importing capitalist poison into his own country.... For foreigners he has been actively collecting data on social conditions in his own country. This information he gives systematically to the imperialists in return for pounds sterling and American dollars." Fei's main objects in writing a new book (*China's Land Problems*) are: (1) "to oppose Communism and the people"; (2) "to support landlords and the system of usury"; (3) "to advise the Kuomintang of the Chiang Kai-shek gang and express support for it"; (4) "to invite Anglo-American imperialists to reform China." A special assault has been directed against one particular agricultural survey (never completed, it seems) carried out by Fei and his colleagues in the Chiang Tsun region. According to *Jen Min Jih Pao*: "He wanted to demonstrate his preconceived conviction that the peasants were earning less after the co-operativisation than before the liberation." He is charged with manipulating his survey in such a way that he could say "the income of the middle peasants has not increased appreciably" and that "many peasants feel that they are worse off than before the liberation."

One hopes that Professor Empson and Mr. Dover will now spring to Fei's defence, as they did before. His need, this time, would seem to be more urgent.

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After the war, in many East European countries, the Communists made use of reactionary pre-war politicians, including fascists. But they usually were used in their individual capacities only. The case of PAX in Poland is an interesting exception. Its leader, Boleslaw Piasecki, was before the war the head of ONR-Falanga, a Nazi-like organisation specialising in anti-Semitic pogroms, and self-designated candidate for the post of Polish Führer. The war over, Piasecki was arrested by the Russians, but after a conference with General Serov, to whom he submitted a detailed memorandum about his proposed activity, he was released and permitted to organise the "progressive Catholics," first around the weekly, "Today and Tomorrow," and then in that strange organisation, PAX.

"What is PAX? It is difficult to give a simple answer. It is not a political party but it has a political programme; it is not a movement and yet it puts forward Parliamentary candidates. It publishes journals and books, controls two great corporations with a turnover of milliards of zlotys; it has its own foreign affairs department, its own real estates, its fleet of motor-cars; its own schools and sanatoria.... Some police actions within its own ranks indicate that even this attribute of power has been given to this strange institution." (*Leopold Tyrmand*, Swiat, *18 October, 1956.*)

PAX was organised on hierarchical lines, with a strict discipline, a cult of personality of its leader, and a lot of secrecy about its command. Piasecki was given a monopoly of trade in devotional objects and he developed on his own other forms of "private enterprise": repair workshops, building-products firms, bookshops, private transport, publishing houses, etc. The combined profit of its two subsidiary companies, INCO and VERITAS, amounted in 1956 to 120 million zlotys.

"From a formally legalist point of view PAX enterprises retain the character of private limited companies.... At the same time they enjoy almost every kind of privilege granted to the state enterprises.... But PAX's greatest privilege is its exemption from income tax as well as from any kind of payment to the government treasury out of profits." (Zycie Gospodarcze, *July 7, 1957.*)

It is not surprising that Piasecki became the richest man in Poland, living in conspicuous luxury. He is the only man in Warsaw with a Jaguar. His political activity consisted in persuading Catholics of the necessity of collaborating with their Communist rulers. Despite the Vatican's condemnation, Piasecki, with his large network of dailies, periodicals, and publishing companies producing religious literature, played the part of a Catholic leader. He represented, in fact, a triple paradox: a "loyal" Catholic in a predominantly Catholic country where the head of the Church was under arrest; a fascist Führer under a Communist dictatorship; and the biggest entrepreneur in a socialist economy.

On the eve of the October revolt, Piasecki published an article, "The Instinct of State," appealing for a stop to the "thaw" and for the resumption of strong-arm methods. Later, in May, he published in his daily *Common Word* an article which, coinciding with similar hints in the Soviet press, attacked the liberalising policy, the "pseudo-intellectual waverings," the "cosmopolitism" and "revisionism" of the Gomulka régime. In July, Cardinal Wyszynski formally prohibited the Polish clergy to write for any PAX publications; but this injunction has not been published in Poland, the censorship forbidding it. The official Church hierarchy cannot get rid of PAX so long as Gomulka refuses to co-operate. And Gomulka continues to protect Piasecki for reasons that may be connected with the fact that Piasecki now enjoys the powerful protection of a country which, before the war, he was denouncing as a fountainhead of "Judeo-Communism."

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LETTERS

The Montesi Affair

As an old hand in the field of Montesi research, I was immensely interested in Wayland Young's article [September issue]. I gave it to a beginner in this branch of learning, so that he might advance his studies, but he confessed that he was none the wiser for it. I consoled him by telling him that nobody was expected to get any wiser from the Montesi affair. The most one could hope for was not to get more stupid.

Because that was what, in fact, provoked the scandal: the Italians suspected, quite rightly, that they were to be taken in. An Italian will endure with resignation alien rule, dictatorship, parliamentary democracy, poverty, wretchedness, and a blank draw in the lottery; but if he thinks he is being taken for a *fesso*, or that the idea is to turn him into one, he goes sour. (The word *fesso*, with its opposite *furbo*, stands for a basic concept in Italian psychology, and covers all kinds of deficient intelligence, from blockhead to simple-minded credulity, but particularly the latter.) *Non ci lasciamo far fessi* (we're not going to be taken in), the people said at the time. And they are still saying it now: if the police had only dished out a more plausible lie at the beginning, we might have swallowed Wilma Montesi's suicide; but paddling! —we couldn't swallow that.

Wayland Young seems to be completely unaware that it was out of this paddle that the flood of the Montesi scandal erupted. For him the scandal was born in a café, where someone (a malicious journalist, of course), winking cunningly, said: "I know who it was." It may be that the rumour did start in a café. But how does clever Mr. Young know that the man in the café did *not* know who it was? I do not mean to say that café gossip is always well-founded. But in this particular case the rumour had a far more credible ring than the statement issued by the police. The official version was in fact so stupid that every newspaper reader was bound to ask himself: has old Polito gone completely crazy, or does he take us for idiots? For many people this question was answered when the rumour moved from the café to the columns of the press, but most of them remained uncertain until the journalist Muto and Annamaria Caglio took the limping investigation into their own hands, and with the help of Jesuit fathers and others brought to light a number of facts which seemed to corroborate the café version of the affair. Now it was clear to everyone: Polito takes us for *fessi*. And the storm of indignation broke.

The Montesi scandal which now gained ground consisted in fact of three scandals: (1) a judicial scandal; (2) a social scandal; (3) a political scandal. The last was thoroughly tendentious. There was no question of making the government and the entire Democrazia Cristiana responsible for the dirt.) Of the two others, the first was partly and the second entirely justified. The judicial scandal was to some extent retrieved by Dr. Sepe's investigation. (Dr. Sepe is more than the fat and phlegmatic man of Wayland Young's picture; he is one of the few upright men who have had anything to do with the affair, and is consequently disliked by certain people.) With the best will in the world, the social scandal could not be hushed up.

From the two scandals arose two trials, a judicial one and a moral one. The second was no less important than the first, although its only forum was public opinion and no sanctions were contemplated. The two trials should not be confused—an error into which, it seems to me, Wayland Young has fallen. For the fact that in the judicial trial the accused won the case does not mean that they emerged clean from the moral one. That was a case which they lost. And they lost it three and a half years ago when, in the Muto trial, the Colonel of Carabineers read out the life story of the "marquis" Montagna and the list of his friends. *Eccoli*, said the Italians, now at last they're in the stocks. True, not all who deserved to be in the stocks were there—far from it; but still, there was a pretty good crowd of them. True, this did not reveal "who did it," but people said to themselves: "After all we've heard about him and his friends, you can believe anything." This was also the opinion of the examining magistrate.

The judges in Venice were of another opinion. They adhered strictly to the legal evidence before them, which was full of gaps, and acquitted Piero Piccioni and the other accused. *Ecco*, Wayland Young, the expert on Italy, will say, I knew that the café chatterbox knew nothing. He seems to equate a court judgment with demonstration of truth. Can this trial be taken seriously at all? I find it surprising that Wayland Young has not noticed how grotesque the entire proceedings were. He seems to me not to know the dark side of the Italian national character. He enumerates thirty Italian immortals, from Horace to Benedetto Croce, but forgets that Pulcinella and Arlecchio, Brighella and Truffaldino, are also immortal. At the Venice trial the *maschere* of the Commedia dell' arte were well represented in every part of the court. The tactics of the defending counsel were designed to make the whole trial ridiculous. The majority of the 200 witnesses were no more serious. There were among them virtuosos of the art of misrepresentation, of conjuring tricks, of moral acrobatics, and

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also genuine *buffoni*. What was most comic in the whole business was the exchange of parts. The rôle of public prosecutor had again to be taken over by Annamaria Caglio, because the real public prosecutor in fact acted as chief defence counsel. . . .

From the legal point of view, the trial was scarcely exemplary. It was known from all that had gone before that the charges were not firmly grounded, and an acquittal was expected from the outset. But the verdict would have been more convincing if the conduct of the trial had been more serious and less one-sided. The only result achieved was a psychological by-product: the trial acted as a cold shower to cool down passions. The story of the Montesi scandal could be entitled "From paddling to cold shower." . . .

Wayland Young also deals at length with the psychological and sociological background and underground to the affair, and offers a political interpretation. He has observed the Italians very carefully and has come to the conclusion that they are friendly, gregarious, fond of children and of singing—well, yes, when love fades they get angry and cry *basta* and begin to quarrel, but in general they're all for *amore*. In my opinion, Wayland Young seems to have exaggerated the revolutionary temperament of the Italians. It is enough to start a street riot in Sulmona, but not a revolution in Rome, Milan, or Turin. That is why his contention that the Montesi scandal was a sort of *ersatz* revolution seems to me, to put it mildly, over-sophisticated. He goes so far as to say that "It may be that Italy's still being on this side of the Iron Curtain is due to Piero Piccioni's undeserved ordeal." At that the uninitiated can only gasp. Surely a monument will have to be put up to the young Piccioni, with figures of Montagna and Polito at the base. Was the Montesi scandal a lightning conductor to deflect the revolutionary storm? I think it was rather a means to pep up the Italians. At last there was something interesting to read in the papers; the Italians had something to talk about over their dinner. The mysterious political physician to whom Wayland Young attributes the discovery of scandal therapy must have said to himself: All these boring political goings-on are making the Italians more and more apathetic. I must prescribe something that peps them up a little. The lead in football and *totocalcio* are no longer enough. Let us try a strong dose of Montesin. And the experiment was successful.

GUSTAV MERSU

Rome

"L'Affaire Djilas"

I WAS quite amazed to read Mr. Lowenthal's optimistic comments on economic trends in Yugoslavia in your October issue. So much optimism is hardly substantiated by statistical evidence available in United Nations publications or in the Yugoslav statistical year-book. Although there is in Yugoslavia a marked improvement, which has followed after long years of Communist mismanagement, overall results are still very poor, comparing unfavourably with current trends in Western Europe. During the years 1949–1954 average grain production reached only seventy per cent. of its pre-war level, in spite of the fact that pre-war output was only less than half of yields per hectare in Western countries. In Western Europe, however, overall agricultural production showed a steady progress from 1949 and by 1954 it had surpassed by one fifth the pre-war level (see *The State of Food and Agriculture*, page 10; *Economic Survey of Europe in 1954*, page 31). According to the *World Economic Survey*, in Yugoslavia "Agricultural production fell by about fourteen per cent. in 1954 and rose by sixteen per cent. in 1955, but again declined by twelve per cent. in 1956" (page 252). Industrial production fared somewhat better, though considering the low level of the starting years, the rate of increase ought to have been much higher. Production figures in index numbers are: 1949, 100; 1950, 103; 1951, 99; 1952, 98; 1953, 110; 1954, 127 (see *Economic Survey of Europe in 1954*, page 21). In 1955 production figures stood at 116, compared to the previous year, and in 1956 at 110 (*World Economic Survey*, page 252). . . .

In Mr. Lowenthal's interpretation, now that foreign tourists can easily enter Yugoslavia, and there are foreign papers available and people dare to talk to foreigners, there is evidence that the régime is rather authoritarian than totalitarian. If we strictly accept this view, then only Stalinism could be branded as totalitarian. I can hardly agree with that. In Hitler's Germany, for example, there was more freedom than there is to-day in Yugoslavia, particularly in the economic field. It was nevertheless the most repellent and cruel form of totalitarianism, in spite of the fact that German tourists could go freely abroad, one could buy foreign books and papers in the country, and so on.

Djilas's persecution itself offers the most convincing evidence about the totalitarian character of the régime. Marshal Tito's repeated approval of the Russian intervention in Hungary also makes me believe that the Yugoslav dictator has already set definite limits to any liberalising tendencies.

G. CSERENYEY

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I WOULD like to add a few comments to the articles (by R. H. S. Crossman, Morgan Phillips, and Richard Lowenthal) published in your October issue under the joint title "L'Affaire Djilas."

I was puzzled to see to what extent some of the conclusions of Mr. Crossman and Mr. Lowenthal are divorced from their own opinions. In Mr. Crossman's view Djilas's book is "obscure and incoherent," "unconvincing"; "it is, in fact, a bad book . . . and full of contradictions." I agree with that. I also agree with Mr. Crossman's opinion that this book will be of use neither for "those people who are likely to read it most eagerly and praise it most highly" nor for the Western Social Democrats. If that is so, why then "should [that book] be read and analysed line by line in the Communist countries?" Are the people there less clever, or do

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they deserve less? And ought they, in Mr. Crossman's view, to take that book as a new Gospel and fight for it? I could venture to provide a suggestion on those lines to Mr. Crossman (just for the sake of logic): what about going one single step further, attaching copies of that book to balloons and sending them from somewhere in Western Germany? Unfortunately advice of that kind is unnecessary; Djilas and his publishers have had exactly that in mind from the beginning.

Mr. Lowenthal writes: "... his [Djilas's] despairing response to the dilemma seems to me neither to follow with logical necessity nor to be in accord with actual experience." That book, asserts Mr. Lowenthal rightly, "is strangely out of harmony with the picture that presents itself to the visitor to Yugoslavia to-day." Yet Mr. Lowenthal accepts Djilas's self-invented "dilemma" (I do not see any dilemma in Djilas's mind or in his book either!) and himself steps out of the path of the "logical necessity" of the developments in Yugoslavia. Some of the statements made by President Tito during the last day of Mr. Gomulka's recent stay in Belgrade may have cleared the picture in so far as Mr. Lowenthal is concerned, but would it not be wise to give a new society at least a fraction of the time some older social systems have had at their disposal in developing towards their own maturity?

I do not propose to comment on Mr. Morgan Phillips' article. I simply did not find in it anything that could provide a point for discussion, but the old and known readiness *de faire des affaires* if some people do not accept his gratuitous lessons about their own business.

Meanwhile Djilas has been sentenced according to the laws he voted for a few years ago. It could be of some use if it turned out that a good habit has been created, and that now and then a similar amount of printed matter and keen interest is given to the other, somewhat bigger part of the Yugoslav peoples: to those millions that are free and busy with more creative work. It may be that they, too, have something to say.

BOZIDAR BOZOVIC

London correspondent, Yugoslav Radio

"The Unservile State"

IN HIS diverting but highly misleading review of *The Unservile State* in your October issue, Mr. Wollheim attributed three provocative and (to him) distasteful propositions about liberal social policy to Mr. Peter Wiles, Mr. Graham Hutton, and myself—the acceptance of income inequality, the "severe reduction" in social services, and the provision of tax relief for those who choose not to have their children educated by the State. These propositions were not only stated without reference to the qualifications surrounding them, but the barest mention was made of the economic environment in which they would be supposed to operate. In view of these important omissions in the review, may I be allowed to state my own position briefly?

As a liberal, I think that we can best attack the problem of economic inequality by concentrating on the redistribution of wealth, for example by the use of heavy inheritance taxation, and by the maintenance of a high level of employment. These measures should take care of the problem of the poverty in the long run, although no persons would deny that, in the short run, we must relieve the desperate position of many old persons, whose opportunities to provide for retirement were destroyed by the years of depression. Nor do these measures preclude some discriminatory taxation on incomes as well, as, for example, a high exemption limit.

If we are able to reduce inequalities in this way, then the case for nationalised social services rests on grounds other than their function as redistributors of income. Mr. Wollheim omits to mention that I argued that a strong case could be made out for nationalized hospital services (see p. 126) on efficiency grounds, although a separate case has to be made for highly centralised services. The case for compulsory saving for old age is also a strong one, although liberals like myself would prefer to see a society in the future where, given rising living standards all round, individuals themselves took responsibility for the amount and the form of their saving.

Mr. Wollheim belongs to the category of Socialists who believe that social services, particularly education, should be used to introduce the classless society. He is entitled to form his own value judgments, although it is arguable whether compulsory and uniform state education would produce the state of affairs he desires. But, as a philosopher, he should know better than to commit the error of classifying his view as the "scientific" one, as he implies in describing those of his liberal components as "unsociological." No one has a monopoly in ideals.

ALAN T. PEACOCK

Edinburgh

"Poland, Left of Centre"

IT SEEMS invidious to pick holes in Mr. George Watson's comprehensive and deeply interesting Letter from Warsaw published in the September Number of ENCOUNTER ... but as a Polish student living in Poland, I feel I can modify Mr. Watson's views on young Polish people. He says, "They are serious, but not in the least interested in theories." But they are. There are, roughly speaking, two equal groups of young people in Poland: those who search for ideals and those who do not care to do so. One of the editors of *Wyboje* said that those who "don't give a damn about politics or even about religion" are known as "liberals." But those who refuse, for thinking or unthinking reasons, to be concerned with politics cannot be described as liberal—liberals as such scarcely exist in Poland at all—but they would nevertheless engage in revolution, the one political activity which is, in spite of what the editor said, still open to all. The liberals of whom he spoke are better called egotists, subscribing to the cult of the individual.

Polish students "want enormously to hear about

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the West," yes, but every bit as much about Western thought. Western novels are indeed widely read but by no means only the earthy kind. Hemingway is indeed very popular, but is he sensual? Of the Entertainments by Mr. Graham Greene, only *A Gun For Sale* is translated into Polish.

Finally, Mr. Watson mentions the sentimentality of the younger generation. The older generation may tend to be a little sentimental, but the young people while their emotions cannot strictly be classified, shun and despise sentimentality. The very circumstances of their upbringing are surely sufficient explanation for that. Alas, they do not hate cruelty, for it has become a language which everyone understands.

ANDRZEJ ZGORZELSKI

Catholic University
Lublin, Poland

Angry Young Men (cont.)

FOR THE purposes of this letter, I think I can safely lump Mr. Tynan and Mr. Osborne's articles together and label their central subject-matter "Toryism." I would like to make a few observations on the quite different vantage-point from which it is possible for a young American (I am twenty), capable of liberal thought, to sometimes judge this institution. . . .

In America, the problem is not in fighting the injustices of an aristocratic society, but fending off the pressures towards conformity from the great democratic masses of their fellow-countrymen. To be sure, all these people are to an extent controlled by what in this country might be an "aristocracy"—the business, advertising, and mass-media executives. But, as we are probably as close to an "open society" as anyone has ever been before, it is impossible to think of "the Establishment" versus "the masses." To whatever the degree may be that conformity is mandatory in our society, it is enforced not by reference to tradition, but to other people and their opinions. The difference between those who "rebel" in Britain (if Toryism *is* the bugbear) and those in the United States, is that here we more or less consciously push away from "the masses" towards a rather vague "aristocracy" of those who have no need to conform.

Macmillan has a certain appeal to me; which, if he actually represents the vicious complacency of Toryism as presented by Messrs. Osborne and Tynan, I'll have to renounce. But just to look at him I find it hard to believe that he would actually consider a Cockney working man to be less human than himself—something out of Dickens, a mere comic symbol of the lower classes, instead of a human being capable of real need, real terror, and real pain. Could even the thickest Tory believe that? It is easier for me to see him as I would most like to: as a slightly old-fashioned politician, nonetheless intelligent, responsible, broadminded, and liberal; and to view the Edwardian dandyism as the sartorial gesture of a proud man, a natural aristocrat, against conformity, along with a nostalgia for a time when men were not expected to pander to mass opinion. The moustache, the twinkle in the eye, the country estate—how charming! . . .

I wonder if Britain's emotional problems would be helped by the demise of the Tory Party. What real sustenance could Labour offer? . . . Maybe in their own way they, too, are Tories: they envisage future possibilities only within the framework of their own traditions. Mr. Osborne's optimism about the prospects of a truly human society built on the ruins of Toryism is wonderful, but as an American living on the West Coast of the United States, sort of the *avant garde* of the most advanced technological society in the world, I am sceptical. When Toryism falls, it will probably be because the insignificance of his country as a real force in world affairs will be impossible for the average Briton to deny. (Despite such delaying-tactics as "OUR H-BOMB!!") His response to this will probably be less than creative; he will probably just adopt Americanism. . . .

And who can say whether they will be more or less happy? Jimmy Porter might manage a supermarket, live in a ten-room split-level home, and be in the same social class as his mother-in-law, but he might also be less of a human being than our old friend in the attic. . . .

Let the cats in the London jazz-clubs laugh at Honest Harold, his complacency, his classy posing, and his corny oratory—but they should enjoy a little bit the fact that he's there. Few problems will be solved just because his bunch are gone.

FIELDING LEWIS

Pasadena, California

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THE VIEWS of Mr. John Osborne in your current issue have been reported as far afield as Ottawa; not in full, but perhaps sufficiently that one may fairly comment on them.

The subject of the relative merits of a republic and a monarchy is one on which a Canadian can qualify almost automatically as an expert. We have had it before us for a long time. Since 1776 we have lived next door to the world's best salesmen, who feel strongly that a republic is not only the best but the only respectable form of government.

We are not casual observers, we have studied the habits and moods of our giant neighbour, as a fisherman does the weather, because it is our business. It is also our pastime. We enjoy an American election, for example, as much as, or perhaps more than, a Canadian election.

It is an impressive fact, then, that there is no discernible body of opinion in Canada which is republican; there is not one responsible political leader who advocates a republic.

This could not be due to sentimentality; no, we pride ourselves on our common sense. It is not perverseness, as some Americans suspect (it was Charles A. Lindberg, in 1939, who questioned whether "Canada should be allowed to drag the American continent into war because they prefer the crown of England to American independence"). It is not, worst of all, sheer inertia.

I would not wish to pain Mr. Osborne, but the principal reason is that a constitutional monarchy is more efficient. Of course it is also more fun, but let us consider, for this discussion, the practical aspects.

I suppose there are sound psychological reasons why it is better for the "Chief Executive" to be the servant of the state, rather than Chief of State as in the United States, but it is also handy in everyday routine. Consider, for example, that every bill requires the presidential signature in order to become law; multiplied on the scale which in fact it is, this is a time-consuming bore which helps make the U.S. Presidency the man-killing job it is. This is a task which our Prime Minister has the Governor-General to perform for him; as well as the many social chores devolving on a head of state, such as receiving ambassadors, eating banquets, laying cornerstones, making gracious speeches, visiting outspots like Aklavik or Anticosti Island, and being made an honorary chief in Indian bands. Never think that the Prime Minister doesn't appreciate it. . . .

As a national symbol the monarchy has the vigour and colour of natural growth, and can focus the history of a country and reflect its character incomparably better than any artificial symbol can. Republics have to have their symbols too; when the Americans dispensed with the monarchy they looked around for substitutes. As a matter of fact, they work their symbols very hard, to an extent which can be irritating to outsiders who do not understand the reason: which is, that they were assimilating people speaking every tongue in Europe, and you can build a nation faster with emotion than with reason alone. . . .

It might be debatable for a country such as Norway, perhaps, whether a monarchy makes a better focus for national feeling than some other symbol; but for Britain there is no substitute. With the march of the dependent parts of the Empire into the Commonwealth, the monarchy is not less serviceable but more so; no other link acceptable to the varied members has even been suggested. The newly independent dominions of Africa and Asia do not recognise the Queen as head of the Commonwealth with a view to exploiting the connection, as some cynics might feel; the link represents a fund of genuine goodwill, the most precious commodity in the world to-day.

Many people feel that while one can theorise about the value of such a bond, it is impossible to prove it. Nevertheless it can be demonstrated.

In 1939 Canada and the United States were in very similar positions: both were independent North American countries of European stock, both political children of Great Britain, both appalled by the march of German expansion. Alone of the American countries, Canada declared war. We had no greater stake in European civilisation than the United States, and no more warlike spirit than our neighbours. The explanation is that when people have to face up to an unpleasant fact, in this case that it was Western civilisation which was at stake, the Canadian people started from the premise that Canada and Britain were both members of the same Commonwealth, sharing the same civilisation; while the Americans, lacking any concrete link, took refuge in their favourite fallacy that European wars are not America's business. Canada would no doubt have declared war without the visit of the King and Queen in the summer of 1939, but it unquestionably helped. It was a visible proof of our common outlook.

There is a point, not often mentioned; Canada cannot take credit for it, it simply happens to be a fact; and this is that Canada's declaration of war meant that sooner or later the United States would have to come in too. The United States could never permit an unfriendly power to occupy, or attempt to occupy, Canada.

So much for the value of the monarchy as a political symbol; in this case of international rather than national life. I feel that for the sake of the rest of us in the Commonwealth, Mr. Osborne might try to put up with the monarchy.

M. L. MITCHELL

Ottawa

. . . HAS Mr. Osborne ever studied Palace life? Can one make assertions without even attempting to find out their actuality? If I were to make some ill-informed remark about Publicans, I'm sure Mr. Osborne would be on me like a shot. . . .

For Royalty to participate actively in politics would incur Mr. Osborne's considerable wrath; their apparent distance from politics also does. Is the answer to allow the monarchy to take part openly in snippets of political activity? Or should we, on his advice, remove it, thus defying the wish of the general public, being overtly anti-democratic? . . .

It has to be faced, the British are sentimental, if

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somewhat undemonstratively so. They like their Queen as they like their dogs (mostly quite useless). To tell people to throw her out is automatically to bring them in a protective belt around her. And more experienced men than Mr. Osborne realise this: socialist M.P.s know if they appeal to the country they have lost their cause; they know that if they let her supporters drum her and her activities into the public mind too much, the public will react with nausea. The throne like an old door will fall from its hinges. To shout that the door needs removing is to make the economically-minded aware of its need for repair. . . .

I might as well add I am considerably younger than Mr. Osborne.

BRIAN BANNER

London, S.W.10

THE two articles by Messrs. Tynan and Osborne in your October issue are in fact some twenty years behind the times. After Mr. Tynan's brief and at times witty exposé of the current attitudes of a section of the bourgeoisie comes this fantastic idea of "what the rest of your generation is really like." How significant that Mr. Tynan finds this reality and sincerity, that he so admires, in a Jazz Club. How romantic, too! For Jazz is a "peoples' art" and therefore true, moving, and incorruptible for idealistic Leftists like Mr. Tynan. Further, we are not only to admire the Jazz Club habitués as people but we are to take their opinions seriously as well.

Now to judge from that admirably honest film *Momma Don't Allow*, the patrons of Jazz Clubs seem chiefly to be such worthy citizens as butcher's boys and shop girls along with a sprinkling of the frankly curious. And in London University, at least, the basic type to be seen at "Jazz Hops" is the woman-chasing, beer-swilling hearty. What makes these people so real or so admirable? And why are their political views valuable? It is all part of the carefully nurtured delusion that anyone with money or breeding must be dim and lead "artificial" and frivolous lives.

With Mr. Osborne we descend from romanticism to emotionalism. Powerful rational arguments can be advanced for democracy but those of Mr. Osborne, based as they are on resentment and self-pity about his working-class background, do much to discredit any viewpoint he associates with. As in Mr. Tynan's case he is hopelessly out-of-date. The inequality of wealth and privilege which he deplores has virtually disappeared since the war because of people like him whose envy led them to destroy what they were too inferior to attain. He combines anger for the Thirties with nostalgia for the 1900's and even so has been called "the authentic voice of his generation."

The real "younger generation" is as likely to be taken in by all this as by the soap-box slogans it so closely resembles.

I. C. JARVIE
M. D. P. WEBB

London, N.W. 8

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BOOKS

"I Dreamed I Stopped Traffic. . . ."

EVERYONE is frightened by Social Science these days; the moralists by the possibility that it will subvert our human freedom, the social scientists by the possibility that it will not. As things now stand, the second fear would seem to be more justified than the first: the Ford Foundation only recently closed down its Division of Behavioural Sciences, in disappointment at the unfilled space between promise and performance. But while social scientists try to mask their fear, out of professional pride, moralists must indulge theirs if they are to write burning tracts for the times. Mr. Vance Packard is of the latter sort, and his book* examines, in urgent tones and strident prose, how "mass psychoanalysis" is being used by the advertising agencies to manage our psyches. He is convinced that there is a kind of conspiracy of the soul-engineers against us, the simple souls; and in his preface to the British edition of his book he declares flatly, with intent to shock, that "Americans have become the most manipulated people outside the Iron Curtain." The qualification is a little puzzling: one hardly thinks of the Russians or Chinese as being manipulated at all, they are sat on so sturdily. Still, it would be discourteous to be anything but alarmed.

What is this New Advertising, against which Mr. Packard warns us? It is perhaps best exemplified in the sales campaign launched by the Maidenform Company a couple of years ago, and still progressing (if that is the word). It consists of pictures of a girl, fully-dressed except for wearing only a brassière above the waist, wandering somnambulistically through city crowds; the caption reads—"I Dreamed I Stopped Traffic in My Maidenform Bra." Presumably it sells brassières; and it certainly must make life on Madison Avenue more agreeable, not to say exciting. Certainly, too, it represents a kind of new departure, in that it so self-consciously and pointedly appeals to our Unconscious—practically flags it down, indeed. And this is what upsets Mr. Packard. He believes it is decidedly unfair. And dangerous. Diabolical, actually.

I ought to confess (what is by now doubtless obvious) that I cannot take Mr. Packard seriously. I *like* the kind of advertising the Maidenform Company goes in for—theirs is the first brassière advertisement that has ever given me pleasure. It is quite possible that, by virtue of such advertisements catching a woman's eye and holding her attention, she might become a complacent customer. And why not? On this question, Mr. Packard is impaled, though he wriggles energetically.

It has been demonstrated, time and time again, and it is repeated by Mr. Packard himself, that people cannot distinguish—for instance—among different brands of tobacco or whiskey, when put to a blindfold test. It is therefore clear that there is no reasonable basis for loyalty to any particular make. The only "rational" procedure would be to smoke different brands of cigarettes according to a series of purely random choices—and genuinely random series are very difficult to construct (some mathematicians claim they are impossible). Mr. Packard, being no enemy to advertising *an sich*, takes it for granted that he is reassuring us when he writes: "... A great many advertising men, publicists, fund raisers, and political leaders, in fact numerically a majority, still do a straightforward job and accept us as rational citizens...." But these men, surely, are the most villainous of all. Any effort to persuade us that there *is* a good reason for buying one kind of soap, or cigarette, or whiskey, or toothpaste, rather than another, is necessarily unscrupulous and deceptive. On the other hand, different brands can in their advertising make various appeals to our fantasy. They are then offering us something real and honest: the indulgence of a daydream. And for this one gladly pays.

Mr. Packard lists the three basic assumptions of the New Advertising as follows:

(1) People do not know what they want.

* *The Hidden Persuaders*. Longmans, Green. 18s.

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(2) Even if they do know, you cannot trust them to tell you.
(3) Even if they do know, and do tell you, one cannot expect them to act logically in accord with these premises.

He seems to think that, with this trinity of platitudes, modern advertising has ruthlessly plumbed the depths. Yet, according to his own evidence, it has not come up with much. A few interesting, if unstartling insights, such as that American housewives are reluctant to buy cake-mixes unless the recipe leaves them something to do—the perfect cake-mix (which was at first offered to them) made them feel superfluous as human beings and delinquent as homebodies. Or that in selling them dishwashing machines one has to emphasise that they will now have more time to devote to their children, any suggestion that they might merely be more leisured inciting their sales-resistance. These modest nuggets are surrounded by a mass of flabby generalisations, e.g., men drink heavily in order to achieve a satisfying change of personality, or people buy freezing lockers because "food in the home represents security, warmth, and safety." Secrets like these, one doesn't mind parting with.

As for "manipulation"—well, there are so many varieties. When a women is being seduced by a man, she is undeniably being manipulated; yet it is a fact that very few of them, after the event, rise up in indignant protest against this flagrant violation of their personalities. It all depends on the circumstances, on the degree of coercion and the degree of consent. The American consumer is, by all the signs, a willing partner in the transactions that occur between the advertising agencies and himself. It is quite true that, whatever the advertisements say, he doesn't "need" a 1957 Buick instead of a 1955 Studebaker. But it is also true that he doesn't "need" the 1955 Studebaker instead of the 1957 Buick: he has the cash and can afford either to save or to spend. The trading-in of the old car for the new is a non-economic, purely personal, and even highly erotic operation, to an extent where the distinction between possession and self-surrender is obliterated. A perfect freedom in this sphere is only won by a perfect abstinence. Otherwise, one must choose; one must decide whether or not to remain faithful, or switch brands; one is being constantly tempted by younger things, bored with older ones; and every action is an implicit, unconscious step in an unending self-definition. One is free to move any which way, but each motion is itself the consequence of being worked upon —yes, manipulated.

The trouble with Mr. Packard's chamber of horrors is that it sometimes amuses, sometimes bores, but never chills. His apocalyptic vision of a society morally and politically controlled by advertising is so much day-dreaming (and self-advertising?) in its own right. It is true that a woman who enters a supermarket apparently (this is discovered by counting her eye-blinks with a concealed camera) also enters a kind of hypnoidal trance. But is this not the appropriate human reaction to a cornucopia? Moreover, she starts blinking fast enough once she approaches the cash-register, as the cameras show—the reality principle is never long in asserting its primacy. It is true that advertising experts worked manfully for President Eisenhower's re-election in 1956. That they had much effect is doubtful; that they didn't prevent the Democrats from capturing Congress is certain. It is true that subliminal advertisements may (the tests are still inconclusive) be able to make us spend another sixpence on popcorn—if we have the sixpence, like popcorn, and have a vendor conveniently at hand at that particular moment. But no more than full-fledged hypnosis can it make us behave in any way contrary to our moral beliefs or habitual loyalties.

I can't help thinking that Mr. Packard has got hold of precisely the wrong end of the stick.

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He is all for the American "economy of abundance"; he doesn't have a thing to say against advertising in principle; he only objects to advertising that, under the influence of psychoanalytical notions, tries to be imaginative and bold. For myself, I find this New Advertising one of the redeeming and agreeable features of the current American scene; I can think of nothing to say for advertising in principle; and the economy of abundance—with its absurd equation of hedonism with happiness—offends both my intellect and my sensibilities. If Americans are credulous enough to think that the Good Life consists of lots of manufactured things, all of which can be bought, then only a misanthrope would begrudge them the accompanying titillations of the spree while it lasts. It is not likely to last forever; and already there must be many who feel, as a friend of mine recently wrote, that the worst part of that Coming American Depression are the years of prosperity one has to endure to reach it.

Irving Kristol

Prometheus Bound?

Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy. By HENRY A. KISSINGER. *Oxford University Press.* 40s.

Limited War. By ROBERT E. OSGOOD. *Cambridge University Press for University of Chicago Press.* 37s. 6d.

The Korea Knot. By CARL BERGER. *Oxford University Press for Pennsylvania University Press.* 40s.

EUROPEAN attitudes towards the H-bomb show an extraordinary ambivalence. On the one hand there is an instinctive revulsion against the moral obscenity of basing one's survival on the threat of genocide. On the other hand there is a desperate will to believe that peace may rest forever on the balance of mutual terror. As the juggernaut lurches towards the precipice, some of the passengers shut their eyes and jump off, others shut their eyes and cling on. It does not seem to strike anyone that it may be possible to master the gears, apply the brakes, and steer the monster into safety.

This abdication of the intellect results in part from the accident that, until recently, only the U.S.A. among the Western Powers has had the capacity and the responsibility for initiating atomic war. Although most of the relevant facts about the new weapons are easily available on both sides of the Atlantic, there has been no obvious political end to be served in Europe by relating them to policy. Intelligent America has been as far ahead of Europe in its strategic thinking as in its military technology. And Europe has not even tried to learn by America's mistakes. As the first European country to produce atomic weapons, Britain has four years later adopted the slogan of massive retaliation just when America has come to realise its dangers.

It is difficult to see how all-out thermonuclear war could now serve any political or moral end. It involves not only the annihilation of both sides but also the maiming of neutrals and of unborn generations. For that reason no country can convincingly threaten to initiate it except in response to an action which threatens its very survival. A lesser threat demands a less deadly form of retaliation. Precisely because the H-bomb makes deliberate total war unthinkable, it re-establishes limited war as the only likely mode of armed conflict between states. The real danger of total war now lies above all in failure to control a limited war. The key to overall security is (1) the deterrence of limited aggression, and (2) if deterrence fails, the ability to halt a limited aggression by means short of total war.

Limited war is the theme of two new American books by Henry Kissinger and Robert Osgood, which contain between them more information and good sense on the atomic revolution in strategy than anything else which has been published. On the major issues they are in general agreement. They start from the fact that the capacity for massive thermonuclear retaliation is a deterrent against deliberate total war, and will remain so despite big fluctuations in the relative striking power of the two sides. They agree, on the one hand, that this capacity is not an adequate deterrent against limited or local war, and on the other hand that its existence in the background is the condition for keeping a local war limited. Mr. Kissinger argues further that for this reason the forces which make up a thermonuclear striking capacity should never be diverted to fight in limited war; indeed he suggests that the classical separation of military power into land, sea, and air forces has lost meaning and should be replaced by division into a "strategic" force for total war and a "tactical" force for limited war.

Both in style and content these books present a contrast between the German and Anglo-Saxon traditions of scholarship. Mr. Kissinger offers a valuable compendium of information about modern weapons, together with a systematic analysis of the relationship between power and policy which they impose, concentrating hard thought about very complicated and unfamiliar problems into simple abstract formulas. The

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weakness of his book is that, though he never forces the evidence, he makes too little allowance for the unknown or the misunderstood. Large blocks of intricate analysis are placed confidently on one another to form a structure which is too neat perhaps to be inhabitable. For example, the excellent chapter on the Soviet "strategy of ambiguity" suggests a Soviet reluctance to take military risks which is not sufficiently allowed for in the purely military sections of the book. Mr. Osgood, on the other hand, is not concerned to establish a theoretical system beyond the minimum framework required to support an analysis of the major current issues, on which he shows extraordinary insight. His great asset is his dogged insistence on seeing diplomacy and strategy as integral to the totality of politics, without ever losing his grip on the concrete situation, here and now.

The most difficult single problem in limited war is: is it possible to limit the use of atomic weapons, or must a clear line be drawn between conventional weapons and atomic weapons—the latter being reserved exclusively for total war? Mr. Kissinger goes too far here in trying to formulate theoretical limitations on the use of nuclear weapons which could be applied in any theatre. This is neither convincing nor necessary. It is unconvincing, because *in theory* the maintenance of such limitations would seem to require superhuman restraints. It is unnecessary because in practice there is only a small number of specific theatres round the Sino-Soviet periphery where it might be to the West's advantage to use nuclear weapons. Mr. Osgood always keeps this well in mind. He devotes a large part of his book to studying the main regions one by one, making full allowance for the political factors which might limit the West's range of military responses. And he is well aware that war is nowadays as likely to result from spontaneous combustion (i.e., Hungary) as from a deliberate act of Communist aggression. What in my view emerges is that though, on balance, there might be a decisive case against the West initiating the limited use of nuclear weapons in many of the potential theatres, the West's ability to wage limited nuclear war could still have the effect of preventing the Communists from massing troops so as to exploit their superiority in conventional manpower. Moreover, once the West is seen to believe in the general *possibility* of limiting nuclear warfare, any residual uncertainty about the feasibility of maintaining the limitations in practice would simply add to the deterrent. If Russia once believes the West has both the capacity and the will to meet local aggression by limited nuclear war, she would avoid any risk of putting Western will-power to the test.

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These are of course all issues of the most immediate and urgent importance. What Messrs. Osgood and Kissinger have done is to provide politicians and others with the conceptual tools for analysing unfamiliar situations so that alternative policies can be presented for rational choice. If anyone believes this is unnecessary, he should read the Hansards for any British defence debate in the last five years. Last year, each of three official spokesmen gave a different answer on the Government's view about limited atomic war. This year the Minister of Defence could give no answer at all.

A GREAT deal can be learnt by looking back at Korea as a case-study of limited war. Carl Berger's "military-political" history is profoundly suggestive in this respect. The first lesson which emerges is that the West may have, in the very unpredictability of its reactions to a crisis, a weapon which—though two-edged—is as valuable as the deliberate ambiguity of Soviet policy. The Korean aggression is often seen as a psychotic gamble by the ageing Stalin. But what stands out clearly in hindsight is that, far from producing any deterrent against Communist aggression in Korea, Western behaviour seemed positively to invite it. Not only did America withdraw all her troops from the peninsula without leaving any political commitment behind; both General MacArthur and Secretary Acheson had publicly excluded Korea from the range of America's strategic interests. In the event President Truman's decision to intervene must have come, not just as a political shock to Moscow, but as almost the violation of a promise. After this disastrous experience the Russians will be very cautious about risking military aggression in any area where the U.S.A. has the capacity to intervene, whatever its formal commitments.

The second lesson is that any modern war is likely to be limited so long as it does not directly involve the vital interests of at least one of the nuclear powers. Truman initially hoped to meet Korea's needs with only sea and air support. Before long he had committed eighty per cent. of America's effective forces to the campaign. Yet even when American casualties had mounted to 130,000, the Administration never seriously considered massive retaliation against the ultimate sponsors of the aggression—though at that time it could have done so without fear of retaliation in kind. Even MacArthur justified his proposals for extending the war to China on the grounds that this would *not* mean total global war. In fact, both sides observed strict limitations even in their use of conventional forces. In return for America's renunciation of bombing beyond the Yalu, the Communists left Japan as a Western sanctuary and did not attempt to bomb the few ports through which the U.N. forces were supplied.

The concept of limited war is fundamental to Communist theory and practice both in Russia and China, as Mr. Kissinger demonstrates with a wealth of evidence. It is repugnant to any democracy—and to America most of all. Yet in Korea the facts compelled America to observe the same restraint as her opponents. And though it was revolt against some of the consequences of this restraint which provoked the doctrine of "massive retaliation" from Mr. Dulles in 1953, even Mr. Dulles has now recanted. His article in last October's issue of *Foreign Affairs* marks a belated return to the idea of local defence.

When Senator Nixon was campaigning against the Democrats in 1952 he said America could not afford any more wars like Korea. Dean Acheson replied that this was the only sort of war America could afford. His opponents have now conceded that he was right. As a result, America's allies can no longer rely blindly on her supposed readiness to destroy humanity on their behalf. For the first time since the defeat of Japan, they will have to start thinking seriously for themselves about the atomic revolution in warfare.

Denis Healey

Dons and Non-Dons

Preliminary Essays. By JOHN WAIN. *Macmillan.* 15s.

The Mirror in the Roadway. A Study of the Modern Novel. By FRANK O'CONNOR. *Hamish Hamilton.* 25s.

AMONG the minor gang wars that ravage the English literary scene is one between academic critics and the rest. The dons find the others dilettante and irresponsible; the others find the dons provincial and doctrinaire. Often both are right. Here we have two books of criticism, one by an academic critic who on his last page abjures his lecture-room, the other by a very unacademic critic who gives his thoughts on the novel in the form of lectures to a Harvard Summer School. There ought to be a moral in it somewhere; perhaps that each is trying to acquire some of the virtues of his complementary type. However, no one could mistake Mr. O'Connor's criticism for anything but that of a practising writer of fiction, or Mr. Wain's for anything but that of an academic.

Mr. O'Connor begins by claiming that the

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19th-century novel is incomparably the greatest of modern art-forms. He is very probably right, but this is just the sort of remark that an academic critic is unlikely to make; he would be too much worried by possible conflicting claims, and by how any such claims could be substantiated. However, it is just the sort of remark that people ought to make; there is nothing like a resounding belief in the importance of your subject to make criticism engaged and lively. Mr. O'Connor also says that symbolism is to be equated with fascism, naturalism with communism, and realism with liberalism. This is again the sort of remark an academic would not make; and I am not sure that it is the sort of remark that anybody ought to make. Of course it expresses a brilliant bit of insight—what oft was thought but ne'er expressed with such dazzling frankness before. But can one really equate literary with political attitudes so easily? And, humanly speaking, ought one to pass from the ways of the imagination to political practice without a very careful management of the transition, without showing a consciousness that one is moving from one world to another? Here if anywhere the much despised academic caution might have something to be said for it after all.

Mr. O'Connor is a liberal, of the kind whose generosity, humour, and humanity must warm everyone's heart. As far as fiction is concerned he is an unrepentant realist. In this he is in line with much recent criticism, which has shown distinct signs of getting tired of the symbolist novel, with its elaborate bag of tricks and its expanded metaphors instead of characters. He is often very funny about this, as when he says of one of the stories in Joyce's *Dubliners*, "I long to know how Mr. Kernan and Martin Cunningham would really express themselves if released for a few moments from the need to be so damn metaphorical." Very funny, but not quite fair, for surely the beautiful, the astounding thing about *Dubliners* is that the prose can resound with Paterian and Flaubertian echoes, symbols blossom under our feet at every step, yet we never feel that we are deserting the real world, full of committee-rooms, bottles of stout, and suburban musical parties. It is almost as though Mr. O'Connor resents consciously pursued beauty of style or form as an excrescence on the novel's true purpose. But this is only his little way, for he has always done ample justice to the beauty before he starts to express the resentment. And his main thesis is surely sound—that the essential foundations of the novel, which it neglects at its peril, are the representation of actual living, in the conditions of an actual, specific time and place.

Having got that fundamental conviction

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across, he has plenty of tolerance to spare for the novelists' infinite variety of ways of setting about their job. He never mentions a writer without having something memorable and penetrating to say about him. He is brilliant, for instance, on Balzac's "theosophy"—his dressing up his fantasies as science; on Turgenev's gentle, discursive, essay-like technique, and its effects on his narrative structure; on the strange contrast between Flaubert's intensely ugly and depressing material and the extravagant beauty of his style. And these detached observations are strung on a solid and well-constructed historical framework. Mr. O'Connor sees the novel as progressing from a form which, under the guise of realism, makes use of a good deal of unassimilated Gothic and romantic material, through a sincere determination to tell the integral truth, to a period when the Gorgons and chimeras reappear, with Bergson and Freud and the psychology of the unconscious. This seems to me both new, and immediately recognisable as just.

But, if I may interpose a little academic nagging, what is rather worrying in these studies is a lack of conclusiveness. Time after time Mr. O'Connor begins with a generous and appreciative account of a writer's virtues. Then follows a shrewd, penetrating, and often extremely damaging account of his weaknesses. Then, just when we begin to expect that the two are going to be weighed up, and that we are going to be told what the balance amounts to, we find that there isn't any more, that we are going on to talk about somebody else. Perhaps that is a consequence of Mr. O'Connor's general procedure, which is to pass from a very assured and professional account of a writer's methods to a very humane and understanding view of his character and type of mind. The conclusion we reach is apt to be that Flaubert (or Tolstoy or whoever) was just that sort of person, and there's an end on't. *Tout savoir c'est tout pardonner*, indeed, but the really inquiring critical mind will want to know a little more. And this is probably to say that the primary and essential Mr. O'Connor is the brilliant short-story writer, with his sympathetic absorption in character and circumstance, rather than the critic, with his mania for explanation.

One important lesson that this book triumphantly teaches is the international character of the novel. Mr. O'Connor protests at the start about the habit of writing its history by countries instead of by periods, and he is himself as much at home with Gogol as with Dickens, with Proust as with Joyce. With the novel this is particularly important—the novel, that suffers so little in translation, compared with drama or poetry; the novel, that nearly always gets translated; whose great exemplars have generally exercised as much influence abroad as in their own homes. Mr. O'Connor makes us realise how necessary this international sweep is, what a stuffy and parochial affair Dr. Leavis's "Great Tradition" looks in comparison, what a relief it is to read a critic who does not believe that all literature would be *Middlemarch* if it could. He also serves to remind us that if criticism is going to claim the status of a semi-independent art, as it is apt to do to-day, it had better remember that one of the traditional requirements of art is that it shall give pleasure. Mr. O'Connor does. Convinced generally, sometimes less than convinced, sometimes left hanging in the air, I enjoyed every line of this book.

Mr. Wain's essays are a very different affair. He is also a novelist and a poet, but his criticism is academic: it seems to have little to do with these activities—nothing like Mr. O'Connor's concentrated absorption in the practice of his own craft of fiction. The mark of academic criticism to-day is that it tends to look on criticism as an independent rite rather than as a means to increasing the proper enjoyment of the arts. And the bulk of Mr. Wain's book has the air of having been composed for one of the denominational papers—*Essays in Criticism*. Not necessarily the worse for that; such periodicals, with all their air of dusty professional fuss, are almost the only places nowadays that find room for a decently strenuous criticism. And Mr. Wain's is strenuous in a way that Mr. O'Connor's is not. His essay on Restoration Comedy really does try to come to a conclusion about Restoration comedy. (I should say it comes to the right one.) And this is an excellent thing. If you raise questions it is a good thing to try and settle them—with a due consciousness that the settlement is not likely to be final, and that there may be other views. There is, to be sure, a good deal of poking fun at the views of Professors A, B, and C, and hope that by modifying the opinions of Professor D we may reach a fifth view E which will be nearer the truth. This is the academic method, and it is not very interesting for those outside the business, to whom the views of these gentlemen are a legend emptied of concern; but the real effort to find a view that shall be near the truth is just the one that criticism ought to be making.

I doubt whether Restoration comedy is much of a worry in anybody's living literary experience to-day; but still, it does survive as the type of a certain literary and social attitude, and it may be good that we should be induced to make up our minds about it. Some of the other long essays are just hacking competently over the old ground. Ovid was much enjoyed by our forefathers, and we should do well to pay due attention to this fact; Wordsworth has been made into a substitute for religion instead of being read as

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a poet; Tennyson and Browning suffered from trying to meet the demands of their age. I seem to have been hearing these remarks ever since I can remember—and they have never yet made me get around to reading Ovid, helped me to see Wordsworth in a new light, or altered the proportions of good and bad in Tennyson and Browning in the slightest degree. Many of the fashionable views of to-day (or yesterday) are accepted without examination—Hopkins is obviously the greatest poet of his century since Wordsworth, etc. Dr. Leavis is right, Mr. Bateson is right, Professor Knights is right, and all the other dons are wrong. But among these not very challenging opinions there is some good detailed criticism—an excellent passage for example on Hopkins' "virtuoso exercises in making language do something for which it is not, ultimately, fitted." Sound examples, in fact, of the general run of University criticism of the post-war type, with the expected virtues and the expected inadequacies.

A shining exception is the essay on Arnold Bennett—by far the best piece in the book. Most of the others do very little to increase our appreciation of anything; they are hardly meant to. In the Bennett essay Mr. Wain has something that he really wants to convince us of. He believes (like Mr. O'Connor) that the realist tradition to which Arnold Bennett belongs has suffered an undeserved eclipse, that Bennett has been seriously undervalued, and that now, in Mr. Wain's own words, "his period of enforced quarantine is over, his passport is in order, and he should be allowed to land at the harbour of English literature." And he supports his case by some admirable detailed argument. On modern poetry he is less happy. There are some good things—a valid criticism of William Empson's methods, and a brief genuine attempt to see Dylan Thomas whole. But he is obsessed by dates—the difference between the twenties and the thirties, the forties and the fifties. Since the only people whose poetry is likely to be of much lasting importance lived on implacably throughout these decades, doing the same things, these distinctions are hardly worth fussing about. And there is something wrong with the tone. (The same tricks of style appear more or less throughout, but they are most noticeable in the dealings with contemporary verse.) "Chunks of the Cantos rolled off the assembly-line, which seemed to be starting and stopping a good deal, but nobody could make much of them." I yield to no one in lack of admiration for the Cantos, but this is not the way to talk, even of the dotages of a man to whom poetry has owed much. It is not even apt, since the efficient mechanical joining together that "assembly-line" suggests is just the quality that the Cantos do not possess. There is a long passage comparing the situation of poetry after the last war to a smashed up tangle of railway lines. It goes on, "My own answer, which certainly got plenty of support once it was voiced, was that the Empson track was the best one to repair.... The Empson boom that followed took me, and I think everyone, by surprise." But why, if you mind about poetry and think it important enough to be worth discussing, discuss it in terms that suggest the advertising of detergents? The ghastly clichés, meant I suppose to show how common sense and down-to-earth one is, produce a similar effect. "That point we can take as read. It is the overall picture that is interesting." Of course Mr. Wain is anxious to avoid the *cher maître*, defence-of-Western-values pomposities of the official literary manner; but they are not best avoided by deliberately talking in a vulgar and trivial manner of things one really cares about. Academic writing does not become any the less academic for trying to ape the jargon of the travelling salesman.

Graham Hough

Two Useful Critics

Craft and Character in Modern Fiction. By Morton Dauwen Zabel. *Gollancz*. 21s.

Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility. By Austin Warren. Faber & Faber. 21s.

As literary criticism multiplies so quickly, it behoves readers to become more severe, lest, in spite of Mr. Eliot's ruling, it should become *de facto* "autotelic," leaving no time for that "enjoyment of literature" which it is required to foster. The first thing we should insist upon is utility; the critic as artist is now too expensive a luxury. But there are many grades of utility; to provide the highest of them a man needs to be a great artist anyway, and it would be uncomfortably austere to confine oneself to that class. Beneath it there are still many grades of usefulness, but they may be lumped together under two heads: criticism that illuminates, criticism that informs. Both these books belong to this last kind of criticism.

Mr. Zabel's book covers much of the same ground as Dr. Leavis's *The Great Tradition*, but illuminates less than it informs. Mr. Zabel is indefatigable in the provision of information from all relevant sources. He quotes other critics constantly, and always at their best; he builds their insights into his own very intelligent reading. Fully aware of the "intentionalist" anathema, he nevertheless gives one all the facts about life and reputation that seem to him, on a

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considered view of how literature works, essential to good reading. This view he has held so consistently over the past two decades that he has been able (enviably) to collect his discrete and occasional writings on the Victorian and modern novel, revise them, and make of them a book held, more or less, together by this very consistency. This way of putting a book together must involve some inconvenience, and Mr. Zabel often repeats himself—though it's always his and other people's good things he repeats—and once, at least, contradicts himself. The long and valuable section on Conrad suffers most from repetition because it is welded together from a number of short papers. A worse consequence is that the book seems to be offering a general theory of Victorian-to-modern fiction and so pretending to some completeness; but although the essays on Dickens, Hardy, James, and Conrad are very solid, those on Forster and Hemingway are inadequate, and there is no treatment at all of Joyce or Lawrence. Mann is briefly discussed, but not Proust; Glenway Wescott but not Faulkner—and so on.

Yet it isn't therefore true that the general theory cannot be taken seriously. "Craft" and "character" are related for Mr. Zabel much as they were for his prime master, James: "the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together." James showed that in fiction also it was the great end of the artist to hold, as Yeats put it, "in a single thought reality and justice." Conrad knew this; Mr. Zabel admires him for his achievement of "complete coincidence of the processes of psychic recognition and recovery with the dramatic necessities of the plot," and because he perceived, in his desolated way, the moral choice that confronts the modern artist: will he surrender to a world of "phantoms with maniacal gestures" or wear "the ball and chain of his selfhood?" "It is only the elect who are convicts . . . which would you be: idiot or convict?"

Mr. Zabel's criticism is deeply penetrated by these attitudes. He thinks we can learn about what is created by studying also what is suffered. And he thinks that the kind of novel produced by this equation of craft and character begins in England with novelists who seem on the face of it to be mechanical plotters; Dickens, for instance, was increasingly sensitive to this organic relationship, so that *Bleak House* and the novels after it are more deeply identified with Dickens's selfhood, more psychologically plotted, more *organic* than the earlier ones. (It would be interesting to compare, as we now can, the draft development of these books with that of *Under Western Eyes*.) Again, Mr. Zabel's excellent study of Hardy concludes that he can be placed in the tradition of the "poetic" novel, the Melville-Kafka line. The English discovered for themselves that the world was divided into idiots and convicts, and that the convicts alone were *dans le vrai*.

This division is a hypothesis Mr. Zabel shares with pretty well all the novelists he discusses. I have said elsewhere that I find it curious that people are so anxious to know exactly *when* the great division occurred. "The world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts," wrote Willa Cather. Mr. Zabel places it about 1850, as perhaps Hardy did; but at his best he sees that all these novelists really have as their subject that "terrible aboriginal calamity" that made it hard for Adam to connect the prose and the passion, and turned him from the familiar discourse of angels to the life of a convict. Mr. Zabel's final praise for a novel is that it enters a "metaphysical dimension," ceases to be "about" modern disasters like slums or revolutionists or English district commissioners, and becomes Yeats's single thought. Because he can see this, and help others to do so, he is a valuable critic. Somewhere under the facts and snippets of this book lies a purer and shorter one that might have provided less information and more illumination.

THE use of Mr. Warren's book is not a matter of conjecture; it has already served a generation of readers. This edition seems to have been photographed from the original American one; unhappily it leaves out the illustrations, among them the indispensable photograph of Bernini's Saint Theresa in Santa Maria della Vittoria. No attempt has been made to bring the book up to date, but it happens that not much has been added to the stock of information on this poet, and Mr. Warren's will be a standard work for a long time to come. It is very thorough, discusses all the poetry with sense and taste, and handles tidily such vast and complicated topics as 17th-century Anglicanism, Jesuit piety, and Italian *seicento* poetry. The label "Baroque," which we affix more cautiously nowadays, still adheres unchallenged to Crashaw. Rather more is now known about the discipline of baroque art, related as it is to the spiritual exercises given new currency by the Counter-Reformation; Crashaw's "open form" is not just inspired raving. More is known about emblems. Yet even on these subjects the book is adequate, and there is remarkably little in it that Mr. Warren might have wished to change. He might have purged his pages of a few latinate pedantries, modified a few of his theoretic pronouncements, developed his treatment of the Jesuit contribution to the art of the period; but he must find it very gratifying to see how well his book has worn, so that it remains an indispensable guide to this strange and important poet. Once in the 'thirties there

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was seen propped against Giotto's campanile a severe young Englishman deep in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. It would be equally apt for any young English poet, wondering what on earth baroque Rome had to do with him, to settle down beneath the pulpit in St. Peter's, or in that fantastic theatre for which Bernini made his St. Theresa, and read Mr. Warren.

Frank Kermode

Novels

City of Spades. By COLIN MACINNES. *MacGibbon and Kee.* 15s.

The Last Angry Man. By JAMES GREEN. *Longmans.* 18s.

I Wish He Would not Die. By JAMES ALDRIDGE. *The Bodley Head.* 12s. 6d.

The Game. By MICHAEL HASTINGS. *W. H. Allen.* 12s. 6d.

A Feeling in the Air. By DAVID HUGHES. *André Deutsch.* 16s.

Gilberte Regained. By PHILIPPE JULLIAN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 13s. 6d.

THE flow of contemporary fiction, a soundless, subterranean stream, from publishers through polite Sunday reviews to Boots Libraries and caverns of complete oblivion, is depressing. The sight of it may drive writers to suicide, silence, or television. Who reads all these books? Are there, on Tyneside or in the wastes of Exmoor, colonies of enthusiasts eager to fork out thirteen and six for the latest instalment of Hampstead adultery or misunderstood adolescence in Chorleywood? It seems increasingly doubtful. Small wonder that despairing publishers try to add colour to the stream by choosing remarkable authors in the absence of remarkable books. At a period when only the works of school girls, Turkish bath attendants, and one-armed Armenian peasants writing in a state of trance command serious attention, all the more credit to Mr. Colin MacInnes for writing a book which comes braying out above the general blur with the eager gaiety of a jazz trumpet suddenly blown in the middle of a concert in the Palm Court.

Comedy, it seems to me, is the only decent thing to be writing in this despairing age, and in *City of Spades* a good deal of savage comedy is underlaid by great good humour. One should be on guard, I suppose, against a writer who shares all one's own prejudices, but I am delighted to find Mr. MacInnes sharing mine—a deep distrust of ballet-dancing ("that sad, prancing art"), a loathing of English pubs, a realistic

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and well-founded terror of the Police. And he writes about something important, that vast, cheerful, sad, misled, high-principled, loquacious, amoral army of Spades who have filled Kilburn, occupied Paddington, and commandeered the Commercial Road; who have, with their interesting scars, small beards, and courteous manners brought joy to the Underground and to a thousand blonde typists in a hundred jazz clubs.

You and I, in Mr. MacInnes' book, are Jumbles (John Bulls). However hard we try we can never seem more than three-quarters alive to a Spade. In the book Montgomery Pew, a battered but never quite obliterated Jumble intellectual, and Theodora Pace, an ageing, competent BBC career girl with deep, unappeased physical needs, love and lose Johnny Fortune, a charming Spade "out of Lagos." Their devotion to him leads them a terrible dance, especially when he is accused of living on the immoral earnings of a certain Dorothy, considered a "serious crime in this serious country." These two absurd, but remarkably credible characters venture into a wonderful nest of Spades haunted by the kleptomaniac Mr. Ronson Lighter, the murderous Mr. Billy Whispers, and Mr. Lord Alexander of the endlessly boring calypsos—perhaps their liking for these idiotic ballads is the last insult the Jumbles will ever offer the Spades.

To write this entrancing story Mr. MacInnes has adopted a technique, last used, if I recall, in *Bleak House*. He writes alternately in the person of each of his two major characters, and then intersperses chapters in which he writes as the novelist—with the all-seeing eye of God. I could do without the eye-of-God bits, Mr. MacInnes being so funny as either his Spade or his Jumble. His dialogue is very good indeed, funny, poetic, and revealing: if Spades don't talk this they should learn it at once. Altogether a highly successful novel, and one which would act like a whiff of marihuana on that dreary old Jumble woman, the British Film Industry.

Among the many similarities between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. is the addiction to social realism—what Johnny Fortune might call that sad, serious art—in which the surface of life is displayed in minute detail and high regard is paid to the health-giving effect of long passages of extreme boredom. Socially realistic as it is I can't deny that Mr. James Green's book, *The Last Angry Man*, is an achievement. He has created, sparing us nothing in flashbacks thousands of word long, a bloody-minded old Jewish doctor in a Brooklyn slum. Around this sharp and uncooperative old party a producer called Woody Thrasher is trying to save his slipping reputation by producing a television programme which sounds like a high-powered and even more embarrassing version of "This is your Life." With great skill Mr. Green makes the doctor as much of a bore as he would be in real life, but I was fascinated by Woody Thrasher.

Woody Thrasher is an archetype of to-day, a writer who can no longer write but is marvellous at selling his ideas to conferences of laxative manufacturers, who is haunted by the ghost of his strangled integrity and whose sex-starved wife, left alone in their semi-country house, is bruising her fingers trying to assemble the do-it-yourself garden furniture which Woody would have paid five dollars to a man to put together. If Woody chills you to the marrow, with his belief in "creative marriage," his talk of "mass communications," his narrow lapels and feelingless bedding-down in the lunch hour with the girl from the script department who would also like to see something of him in the evenings—then take a long drink of iced water and a clear look at yourself. Personally, Woody Thrasher frightens me very much, and I think he is a considerable creation.

After these books the stream flows on with accustomed flatness. Mr. James Aldridge, in *I Wish He Would Not Die* has written about one of those terse, stoic captains in the desert war who behaves, in any crisis, with the terse stoicism of John Mills battling across the lot at Pinewood or adrift on the studio tank. This Captain is the victim of a bad General who is always giving him and his friends suicidal orders which fill the Captain with a resentment he finds it hard to put into words. He also has some off-duty love with one of those "honey-coloured girls," to describe which Mr. Aldridge produces a horribly accurate imitation of D. H. Lawrence. "The marvellous, wonderful, superb, all-embracing touch of it." "And when the gift of it had run out"... and so on. Being so jolly English, this Captain is vague about what this girl is wearing, "She was dressed in yellow or beige or faded brown." In the end he gets shot by an Egyptian assassin, which proves that the Egyptians are, at least, demonstrative. Mr. Aldridge manages to get a sentence or two of acute political observation into this routine job, and at least he can describe the technique of war with a journalist's skill which keeps the pages turning.

This skill is notably absent in Mr. Michael Hastings. With an eager jump on the teen-age bandwagon his publishers remark that he wrote this book at the age of nineteen. I find it hard to think of anyone who, at the age of nineteen, hadn't just this sort of account of sensitive childhood tucked away in manuscript under their clean shirts. In *The Game*, the central sensitive

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child is a Spade, but the author can't identify himself with him, and a very dull little Spade he turns out to be. The children use this sort of dialogue to each other.

"Your face is very lovely and smooth at night. What does God's face look like?"

"Why?"

"Because I should like to say you look like him. That's the best compliment I can give."

In *A Feeling in the Air* Mr. Hughes has written a simple, convincing, oddly moving account of a tough business man's recovery from a nervous breakdown in a small Welsh hotel. As one of the characters says, "This is not a performance, but as sincere as the blue sky." There remains *Gilberte Regained*. This is a collection of stories in which the characters have some reference to, or recollection of, Marcel Proust. It bears as much relation to the work of that great, exhausted, prophetic genius as the captions in *Vogue* do to Shakespeare's sonnets. Above the names of the characters, French accents slope like the roofs of old world villages. You meet sentences like "In the Renoir Madame Ansbach looked like a peach melba in a Poiret dress," or "The Princess looked like Voltaire playing a shepherd's rôle on his Ferney stage." Despite this, and despite the scratchy and affected illustrations, I read gamely on until an upper-class, homosexual Turkish-bath was compared, by way of merry quip, to the gas chambers at Buchenwald. I then put the book gently away with last year's *Tatler* and someone's stale old bottle of Chanel Number 5, and tiptoed off like the old Comte de Something cutting out of a particularly ghastly evening in the Petit Trianon.

John Mortimer

About Our Authors

IAN SCOTT-KILVERT was born in 1917, educated at Harrow and Caius College, Cambridge, and is at present feature-articles editor for the British Council. He has broadcast and published many translations of Greek poetry, and is engaged on a monograph on John Webster and a new translation of Plutarch's *Greek Lives* for the Penguin Classics.

DERRICK SINGTON. Author of *Belsen Uncovered* (1946) and, with A. G. Weidenfeld, of *The Goebbels Experiment* (1942). Has just published (with Giles Playfair) *The Offenders*, issued by Secker and Warburg. South-East Asia correspondent of *Manchester Guardian* for which he covered the Indo-China war and the Malayan Communist insurrection (1950–52). Leader-writer on staff of *Manchester Guardian* (1952–54). Author "Malayan Perspective," a Fabian pamphlet (1953).

We regret that, in our last month's issue, we inadvertently omitted a biographical notice of Edward Seidensticker, who contributed the essay on Tokyo. Mr. Seidensticker writes of himself as follows:

"I was startled, not long ago, when a reviewer described me as an expatriate, but that I suppose is what I am. I was born in Colorado in 1921, graduated from the University of Colorado, did graduate work at Columbia and Harvard, and spent much of the war learning Japanese. For some three-quarters of the years since the war I have lived in Tokyo, first as an employee of the State Department, then under bounty from the Ford Foundation, and finally as teacher (Sophia University), translator, and writer of fugitive prose. Besides going through the usual apprentice work in the Japanese classics, I have translated into English a number of Japanese short stories and excerpts from novels, and three complete novels, and have contracted to do a fourth. I shall continue to translate, I suppose, until publishers decide they want no more."

The drawings that illustrated Mr. Seidensticker's article were by the distinguished Japanese artist and man of letters Shohachi Kimura.

COLIN MACINNES' latest novel, *City of Spades*, is reviewed in this issue.... K. A. JELENSKI, who lives in Paris, contributed the article "The Polish Earthquake" to our August 1956 issue.... JOHN MORTIMER has written several novels and is also the author of some notable television-radio dramas, most recently "Dock Brief".... DENIS HEALEY is M.P. (Labour) for South East Leeds.... FRANK KERMODE is in the English Department at the University of Reading.... GRAHAM HOUGH is at Christ's College, Cambridge.

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